High court okays filing of graft raps vs Doy Laurel

STORY BELOW, COLUMN 1

Pope reads riot act to American cardinals

VATICAN CITY—In an unprecedented, two-day crisis meeting on child sex scandals involving priests in the United States, Pope John Paul II read pedophile priests the riot act in a speech to the American cardinals at the opening session yesterday.

The scandal has grown into the most damaging controversy ever to afflict

POPE/A19

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WHAT'S INSIDE
- **Manero release unlikely–Perez** NEWS / A3
- **GMA to Thailand, Malaysia in May** NEWS / A3
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Thursday, April 25, 2002 ★ 48 pages / 4 sections / vol.17 / no. 136 P15
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Caller ID leads GenSan cops to bomb suspects

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A phone call to a Bayantel office here led to the arrest of three more suspects in Sunday's deadly bombings.

Aided by caller ID, Bayantel, one of the establishments that received bomb threats, traced the call to tel. no. (083) 554-5666, registered under the name of Aron Salah.

Policemen and members of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency arrested yesterday Abubakar Amilhasan, 40; Arsul Ginta, 37, and, Jejhon Macalinsal, 19, in Barangay Calumpang at 3 a.m.

Three days ago, police arrested two suspects—Bobby Sabilo and Maliquin Ampi, alleged members of the MNLF. Benjie Puntuan, a bomb expert and alleged leader of a 10-member terrorist cell in the city, eluded arrest.

Amilhasan is allegedly a former member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and a bomb expert; Ginta, a former member of the New People's Army (NPA), and Macalinsal, a former MNLF member and allegedly responsible for placing the calls that warned of the bombings.

"We consider this a breakthrough as far as our pursuit operations against the suspects in last Sunday's bombings are concerned," said Senior Supt. Bartolome Baluyot, police chief for Central Mindanao, of the arrests.

Baluyot told the INQUIRER that one of those arrested could be Abu Muslim Alghazie,

CALLER ID/A19

Syrian 'consul' accused of mauling ABS-CBN crew

By Jun Malig, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*
and Christine Herrera, *in Manila*

ANGELES CITY—Three members of a television news team and two companions of the honorary consul general of Syria traded charges of physical injuries before the prosecutor's office here yesterday, after the TV crew inadvertently caught the Syrians patronizing a bar in the red-light district the night before.

Both sides alleged that they had been victims of a mauling.

The Department of Foreign Affairs immediately ordered a probe into the incident. Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin said that

SYRIAN/A4

Noynoy: Sin, Cory warned of takeover

SERIOUSLY speaking, Senate President Franklin Drilon and House Speaker Jose de Venecia can't seem to get the attention of President Macapagal who's not exactly in the mood for talk.
EDWIN BACASMAS

No proof of conspiracy, says Drilon

By Cynthia D. Balana and Rocky Nazareno

SENATE President Franklin Drilon yesterday said he would not encourage an inquiry into the alleged junta plot of Freedom Force.

He said the alleged plot was just a concept or proposal and not tantamount to inciting to rebellion, as described earlier by Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel.

"There's no proof that there's a conspiracy to (mount) a coup d'etat," Drilon said at a press conference. "In the absence of evidence, no party can be charged for any crime."

Drilon also noted that all those reportedly involved in the supposed plot had issued denials.

Two other majority senators expressed agreement with Drilon.

Sen. Joker Arroyo said even the admission of Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin that Freedom Force advocates had sought his support had no weight.

"That's nothing. If I tell you, 'Let's attack Malacañang,' that's not a crime," Arroyo said in Taglish.

Sen. Juan Flavier said there was still no clear indication that would support the existence of such a plot despite its being leaked to the media.

Like Drilon, Flavier noted that all the persons cited had denied involvement.

But opposition senators were quick to assail Drilon for clearing the supposed

NO/A20

'Freedom Force' only reported power grab

By Juliet L. Javellana and Carlito Pablo

THE LEFT and the Right have given up on President Macapagal-Arroyo, and there is a group of generals that will take over.

This, according to Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, was the message that the members of the so-called Freedom Force gave as a "warning" to Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin and that the cardinal subsequently relayed to his mother, former President Corazon Aquino.

Congressman Aquino said Bishop Socrates Villegas sought a meeting with Ms Aquino on April 18 to convey the cardinal's position that he would not support the purportedly planned takeover of the generals.

Recalling the message, Congressman Aquino quoted Villegas as telling Ms Aquino that the cardinal was "bothered that it would appear he was supportive of the takeover."

Villegas, he said, further told Ms Aquino that the cardinal was "not supportive (of) and had not been coopted" to join the planned takeover.

"In fact, the cardinal even praised (the President)," Congressman Aquino said.

He quoted Villegas as telling Ms Aquino that the bishop him-

NOYNOY/A20

High court okays filing of graft raps vs Doy Laurel

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SUPREME Court yesterday ruled that former Vice President Salvador "Doy" Laurel was a public official when he served as head of the National Centennial Commission—and can therefore be sued by the Ombudsman.

The high court junked Laurel's petition for permanent injunction, which sought to stop Ombudsman Aniano Desierto from indicting him before the Sandiganbayan on graft charges in connection with the alleged bloating of the cost of the Freedom Ring of the Centennial Exposition in Pampanga in 1998 from P248 million to P1.2 billion.

Former President Fidel V. Ramos was also implicated in the so-called Expo scam for allegedly realigning government funds to finance over P9 billion in projects to commemorate the country's Centennial celebrations.

But Desierto cleared Ramos after Ombudsman probers failed to establish evidence that the former President had committed any indiscretion. Critics of Desierto's decision to clear Ramos pointed out at the time, however, that it was Ramos who had appointed Desierto to his post.

The decision of the high tribunal's First Division lifted the preliminary injunction issued by the SC on Sept. 24 last year.

In dismissing the petition, the SC said it was not the proper forum to decide on the other legal issues raised by the former Vice President. "Obviously, this proceeding is not the proper forum to settle these issues lest we preempt the trial court from resolving them."

The decision was written by

HIGH COURT/A20

Estrada a no-show at Jancom hearing; Aventajado testifies

By Juliet L. Javellana and Volt Contreras

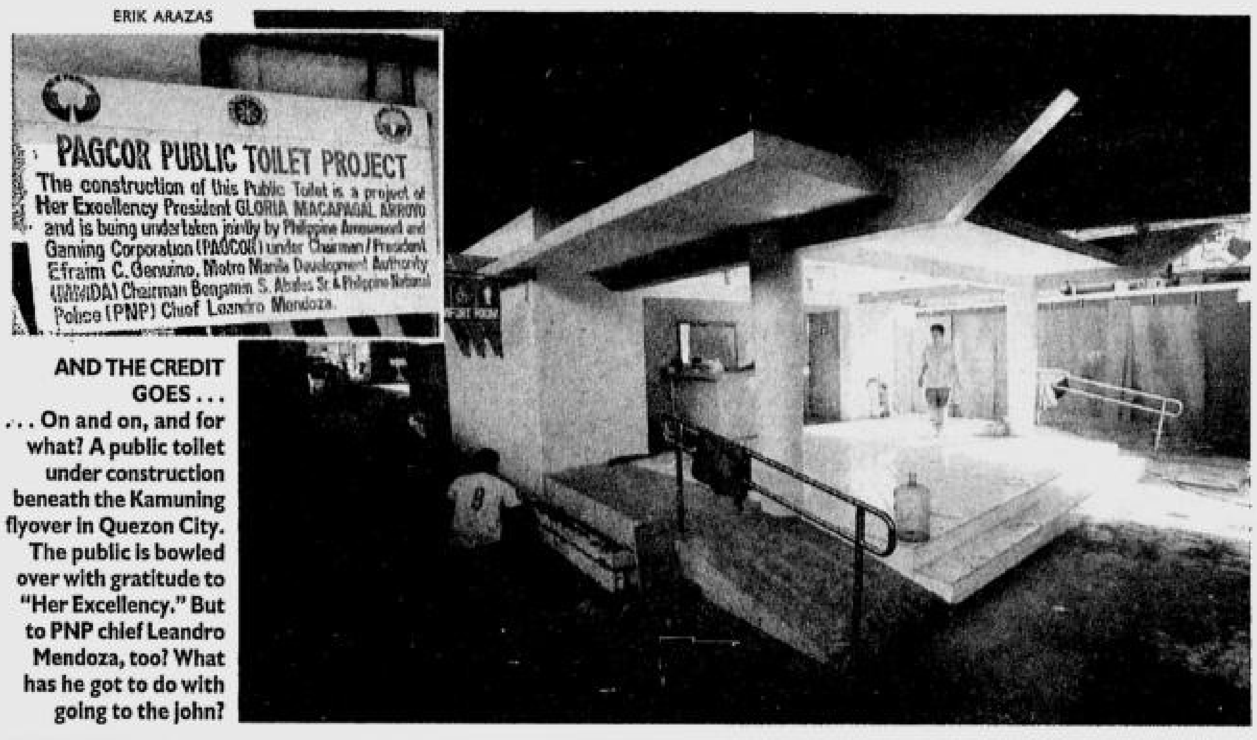
OUSTED President Joseph Estrada failed to show up at yesterday's hearing of the House ecology committee because House leaders did not want him to use Congress as a forum to create a "constitutional crisis," two legislators said.

But Estrada told the INQUIRER last night that he wanted to appear before the committee, but decided against it because he just had gum surgery. He said the wound in his gum was still fresh.

Estrada was allowed by the Sandiganbayan to attend the 1 p.m. hearing at which he was expected to be asked why he did not sign the $350-million garbage deal bagged by Jancom Environmental Corp.

ESTRADA/A4

ERIK ARAZAS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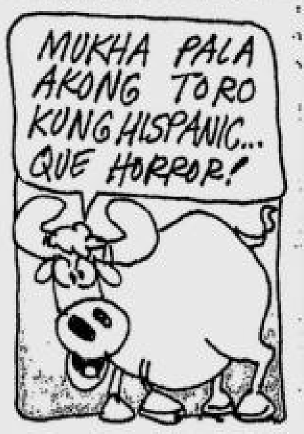
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RACE/A19

HINDI PINANSIN ANG UMA-ANGKIN!

JOSE VELARDE ACCOUNT

Witness ignored Dichaves' claim

By Volt Contreras

PROSECUTION witness Manuel Curato, testifying at former President Joseph Estrada's plunder trial yesterday, admitted he ignored the claim of Estrada crony Jaime Dichaves that it was he and not the deposed chief executive who owned the controversial "Jose Velarde" account.

Curato, an in-house lawyer of Equitable-PCIBank, was asked if he had acted on Dichaves' claim to the Senate impeachment court that he and not Estrada owned the account, which at its peak held over P4 billion.

Dichaves reportedly made the claim four days before Equitable-PCIBank trust executive Clarissa Ocampo testified at the Senate impeachment trial that she saw Estrada sign bank documents as Velarde in Malacañang.

Raised eyebrows

Curato, legal services division chief of Equitable PCIBank, said he "did not determine the veracity" of Dichaves' claim because he was "certain the principal accused (Estrada) had signed" the bank documents as Velarde on Feb. 4, 2000 in Malacañang.

"That Dichaves letter did not merit attention," Curato said during the cross-examination by Estrada lawyer Prospero Crescini.

Curato raised eyebrows in the defense panel when he said he had "no personal knowledge" of the steps taken by Dichaves to claim ownership of the account.

Crescini had asked Curato if he knew that Dichaves "after Feb. 4" wrote the bank "to claim the money," a move that prompted Equitable-PCIBank chair George Go to ask Ocampo "to prepare the documents in relation to that claim."

"I don't remember seeing any letter of that sort," Curato answered.

Defense lawyers said they found this hard to believe since Curato headed the bank's legal department.

Evasive

"He was just being evasive to avoid making any statements damaging (to the prosecution)," said Arturo Temanil, another court-appointed Estrada lawyer from the Public Attorney's Office, during a recess.

In the hearing, Crescini continued to press his argument that Estrada had merely signed the bank documents as Dichaves' "representative" and not as the owner of the Velarde account.

Estrada as Velarde had allegedly signed the bank documents to loan money in the account to another crony, William Gatchalian.

Crescini was able to make Curato admit Estrada had "no participation whatsoever" in the preparation of the documents whose "wordings" were entirely composed by the bank.

"Those documents were merely presented to Estrada for signing," Crescini said, adding that the act of signing alone did not make the accused the real owner of the account.

"The prosecutors only presume that he owned it," the lawyer told reporters after the hearing.

He recalled that Ocampo herself, after seeing Estrada sign as Velarde, "did not authenticate the signatures on the two signature cards—for she was not convinced that Erap was Jose Velarde."

Anniversary

The Estrada camp marked the first anniversary of the ousted president's arrest today with a full-page newspaper ad featuring his open letter to the Armed Forces, saying he "regrets not being able to realize all my plans for you."

Titled "Salute to the Filipino Soldier," Estrada's letter in Filipino partly read: "I know you were not part of the mutiny committed by some of your generals against me.

"But what is sad is that they alone have benefited from it all. They did not look after your welfare and dignity," he said.

He enumerated his presidency's accomplishments that benefited the military: the release of P5.4 billion as the first half of the AFP Modernization Fund, the launching of a housing program for soldiers, and the doubling of their subsistence allowance.

As in previous media statements, Estrada said he has lost all hope of obtaining justice at the Sandiganbayan and the Supreme Court, adding "Whatever the evidence, whatever the truth is, they cannot reverse their decision installing the present administration in power."

'NYAAAH, NYAAAH.' **US Marine Cpl. Joel McLaughlin must have missed his target, as shown by his reaction. American and Filipino troops have been doing live firing exercises in Ternate, Cavite, in the joint Balikatan 02-2 military exercises aimed at improving the skills of Philippine soldiers in fighting terrorism.**

DENNIS SABANGAN

Pinoys teach Americans a thing or two to survive

NORMALLY, they would be the teachers, but on Wednesday the dozen US Special Forces soldiers and Navy SEALs hiking up a hillside became students for one of the Philippine military's specialties: jungle survival training.

Their instructor, Master Sgt. Jaime Agonoy of the Philippine special forces, focused on the basics of living off the land, like finding food—those nasty-looking monitor lizards that abound in the forests taste just like chicken, they were told.

But he also emphasized the importance of keeping a positive attitude when alone in the jungle.

"I can make it. I can survive. I can go home to my beautiful wife," was the mantra that Agonoy provided. "Your body will be healthy and you can live longer and fight the enemy."

He pointed out the edible and medicinal plants, including one that could be ground up and slapped on a wound to stop the bleeding. He demonstrated how to make fire from dried bamboo and how to skin and cook the lizards.

Agonoy, a 25-year Philippine army veteran and a jungle survival instructor since 1992, also showed how to make traps—both for animals and enemies—including one fashioned from a banana stalk festooned with bamboo spikes that falls from treetops after being triggered by a camouflaged tripwire.

The Americans are part of a 660-strong US military contingent involved in a six-month training exercise—an extension of the US war on terrorism—that is focused on helping local troops wipe out the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group.

US Special Forces Sgt. David Lewton said the Americans have undergone jungle training before, but making fire from bamboo was new.

"We got a lot of helpful, useful information," Lewton said. "Each environment, each country is different."

A US master sergeant who identified himself only as Kent said he learned how to make a chicken trap and that it was the first time he had seen a monitor lizard skinned.

"Many different things could happen where you could find yourself separated," Kent said. "Hopefully, we'll never get in a situation where we'll need these, but it's a skill that will help if we are alone."

About 160 Special Forces soldiers are deployed on Basilan island in Mindanao to train Philippine troops pursuing and occasionally clashing with the Abu Sayyaf, which has been holding an American missionary couple and a Filipino nurse for nearly 11 months.

Another 340 US Marine engineers and Navy Seabees have been deployed to Basilan for infrastructure projects. *AP*

Protests to greet Gloria in Davao

DAVAO CITY—Protests await President Macapagal-Arroyo when she visits this city to grace the Centennial Labor Day celebration on May 1.

"We are organizing picket rallies to welcome her," Omar Bantayan, Kilusang Mayo Uno secretary general for Southern Mindanao, said.

Acting Mayor Luis Bonguyan on Tuesday announced the President's arrival on Labor Day to speak before the different labor groups in the region.

"They did not invite us," Bantayan said. "Definitely, we will welcome her with protests."

Besides, he said, there will be a big march and rally on the same day. He said the issues the militant groups would be raising include their opposition to the joint RP-US Balikatan military exercises, militarization, globalization, privatization, contractualization of workers and wage increases.

"Because the Macapagal administration has not answered all these, we are calling for her ouster," Bantayan said.

Chief Supt. Eduardo Matillano, regional police chief, warned protesters to peacefully air their grievances against the President as the police would not hesitate to arrest troublemakers.

"We can assure the citizenry that we will police our ranks," Matillano said. He said he has instructed the police to exercise maximum tolerance. ***Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Cimatu extension no issue—general

THE RACE for the top position in the Armed Forces of the Philippines continued to heat up with a contender yesterday giving his "rivals" a piece of advice.

Lt. Gen. Dionisio Santiago said in an interview that the "extension" of the term of the next chief of staff was not the issue.

"No one has been appointed and yet they (contenders) continue to question (the coming decision)," Santiago said in Filipino.

"The chances of some people (of getting the post) would dim if they continue to (foment intrigue). They're just creating trouble, preempting (the decision)," he said.

Santiago is the most junior among the three-star generals with a crack at the position of AFP chief of staff, having been promoted on April 2 when he assumed command of the Philippine Army.

Reports had been rife that Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu, who is set to retire on July 4, would be named the next chief of staff.

If Cimatu is appointed, the reports said, his term would have to be extended by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

His rivals had seized on the planned extension as an issue, with several "white papers" making the rounds of the camps and media organizations.

Yesterday, the INQUIRER received a copy of one "white paper" warning against Cimatu's promotion.

The document said, among other things, that the AFP promotions board has been asking the candidates if they were in favor of an extension for Cimatu.

Nine out of ten contenders reportedly replied no to the question.

The "white paper" also warned that demoralization might seep in if the plan to extend Cimatu's term pushes through.

But Santiago said this was not the issue.

"Everybody is qualified, although some are trying to create issues. We will support whoever gets the post. The AFP is not the property of anybody by acceptability," Santiago said. ***Martin P. Marfil***

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- Newton D. Baker

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Manero release unlikely–Perez

By Michael Lim Ubac

DESPITE the dismissal of kidnapping with double murder charges against Norberto Manero, and his eligibility for parole in the killing of Fr. Tulio Favali, the government will not recommend commutation of his sentence.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said yesterday the Board of Pardons and Parole was not compelled to recommend Manero's release.

"A board recommendation for parole and commutation of sentence is not compulsory. (His case) would still have to be decided on by the President," Perez said.

Perez said the board was not compelled to recommend the release of a convict just because his pending case had been dismissed.

"It will take into account the good behavior of the convict and the years he spent in prison," he said. "Manero has 19 more years to spend in jail."

Manero, the leader of the dreaded Ilaga paramilitary gang, and his two brothers were sentenced to life imprisonment for killing Fr. Favali, an Italian missionary.

Norberto will have to spend 40 years in prison as the aggregate penalty for four crimes—murder, attempted murder, arson and evasion of sentence. Eriberto was sentenced to a maximum 38 years in prison.

The two Manero brothers already spent 21 years in jail, or more than half their sentences, making them eligible for parole.

Norberto, however, was charged in a separate case involving the kidnapping and murder of members of the Mamalumpong family.

But on April 15, Judge Jaime Infante of the Alabel, Sarangani Regional Trial Court acquitted Manero, alias Commander Bucay, of the kidnapping with double murder charges.

Infante dismissed the case saying the prosecution failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Manero, his wife Leonardo Lacson, alias Commander Inday, and his elder brother Artemio, had committed the crimes.

The three, along with Job Tolentino and Larry Gonzaga, allegedly killed brothers Mambatawan and Ali Mamalumpong in 1977.

The two other accused, however, have remained at-large.

With the dismissal of the case, Norberto became eligible for parole.

Bureau of Corrections Director Ricardo Macala told reporters yesterday Norberto was ready to be transferred from the maximum security compound to the medium security area at the National Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City.

Macala said Eriberto, who was also convicted in the killing of Favali, was also eligible for parole.

Macala said Eriberto's original sentence was commuted during the term of President Fidel Ramos.

"From 32 to 38 years in prison, his sentence was lowered to 18 to 23 years," said Macala. "Thus, he is more eligible for parole than his brother Norberto."

But Perez said there was strong opposition to the release of the Maneros, particularly Norberto.

Youth to pay ₱160M for polls

THE SANGGUNIANG Kabataan youth councils nationwide have agreed to shell out more than half of their annual budgets to fund the special registration for the youth polls in July, the Commission on Elections said.

The Sangguniang Kabataan will shell out P160 million for the registration to be held on May 20 and 21, as well as for the purchase of election supplies.

In a resolution on the registration, the Comelec stipulated that the P160 million would come from Sangguniang Kabataan funds, which form 10 percent of the internal revenue allotments of local governments.

The Comelec resolution was passed Tuesday after a four-hour deliberation on registration guidelines.

The resolution provides for the special registration of youths aged 15 to 18 in the barangay level to be supervised by a registration committee whose members will be selected by the Comelec.

Lawyer Caridad Walse-Lutero, chief of staff of Comelec chair Alfredo Benipayo, said the National Youth Commission had said long before that SK funds could be used for the youth registration and elections.

Lutero said the Department of Budget and Management is augmenting the Comelec budget for the youth and barangay polls to be held simultaneously on July 15.

She said the DBM only needs a few more documents including an authorization from the NYC and the Department of Interior and Local Government before it transfers funds to the Comelec. ***Blanche S. Rivera***

GMA to Malaysia, Thailand

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will visit Malaysia and Thailand on May 7 and 8 to promote investments and address regional business leaders.

Ms Macapagal will deliver the keynote speech at the 35th general meeting of the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) in Kuala Lumpur on May 7, Malacañang Palace announced Tuesday.

The President will also meet with Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad during the one-day state visit to Malaysia, the announcement said. ***AP***

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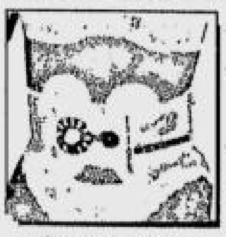

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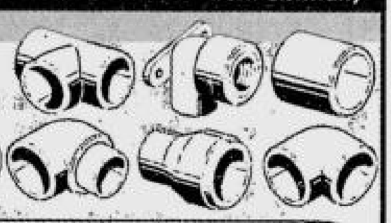

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Syrian 'consul' accused of mauling ABS-CBN crew

From page A1

Mohammad Issam El-Debs, being an honorary consul general, was not entitled to immunity. "The worst that can happen to him is to be declared persona non grata," Ebdalin said.

Initial police investigation showed that the ABS-CBN personnel were on board their company vehicle taking video footage of Fields Avenue at 11:15 p.m. on Tuesday night when they caught Fawaz Habur Kozma, 48, and Mohd Jouma, 35, together with El-Debs and another Syrian identified by the local police as Gamen Madame, in the area.

Fearing that they had been videotaped, the Syrians allegedly demanded the tape from the crew, which consisted of ABS-CBN field reporter Rosamay "Jing" Castañeda, 27; cameraman Isagani Taoatao, 33; and driver William Natividad, 33.

A quarrel ensued after the ABS-CBN personnel refused to hand over the tape. One of the Syrians allegedly tried to grab the camera from Taoatao, prompting Natividad to accelerate, but the Syrians reportedly gave chase using another vehicle, police said.

More violence was prevented after policemen on routine patrol arrived. They found the windshield of the ABS-CBN pick-up already broken and the camera reportedly damaged.

Baseball bat

SPO2 Jose Trinidad, one of the responding policemen, said he saw a steel baseball bat in the possession of one of the Syrians. It was not immediately known who among the four Syrians was carrying the bat, but a report based on the crew's complaint later identified Jouma as the man with the bat.

Taoatao was reportedly wounded and treated at the Ospital Ning Angeles here. One of the Syrians was also reportedly hurt.

After Castañeda and her crew were accosted by the Syrians, she explained to them that they did not mean to take any video footage of their group. They were merely panning the camera to shoot the facade of the bars, she said. She assured the Syrians that they could delete their faces from the videotape.

But the Syrians allegedly pushed Castañeda away and grappled with the cameraman for the videotape.

Jouma, the ABS-CBN crew narrated in the police report, got out of the Syrian's car bringing a baseball bat.

With the bat, Jouma allegedly smashed the ABS-CBN crew cab's windshield. The bat was also allegedly used to hit Taoatao and the Syrians took turns in hitting the cameraman who suffered multiple physical injuries.

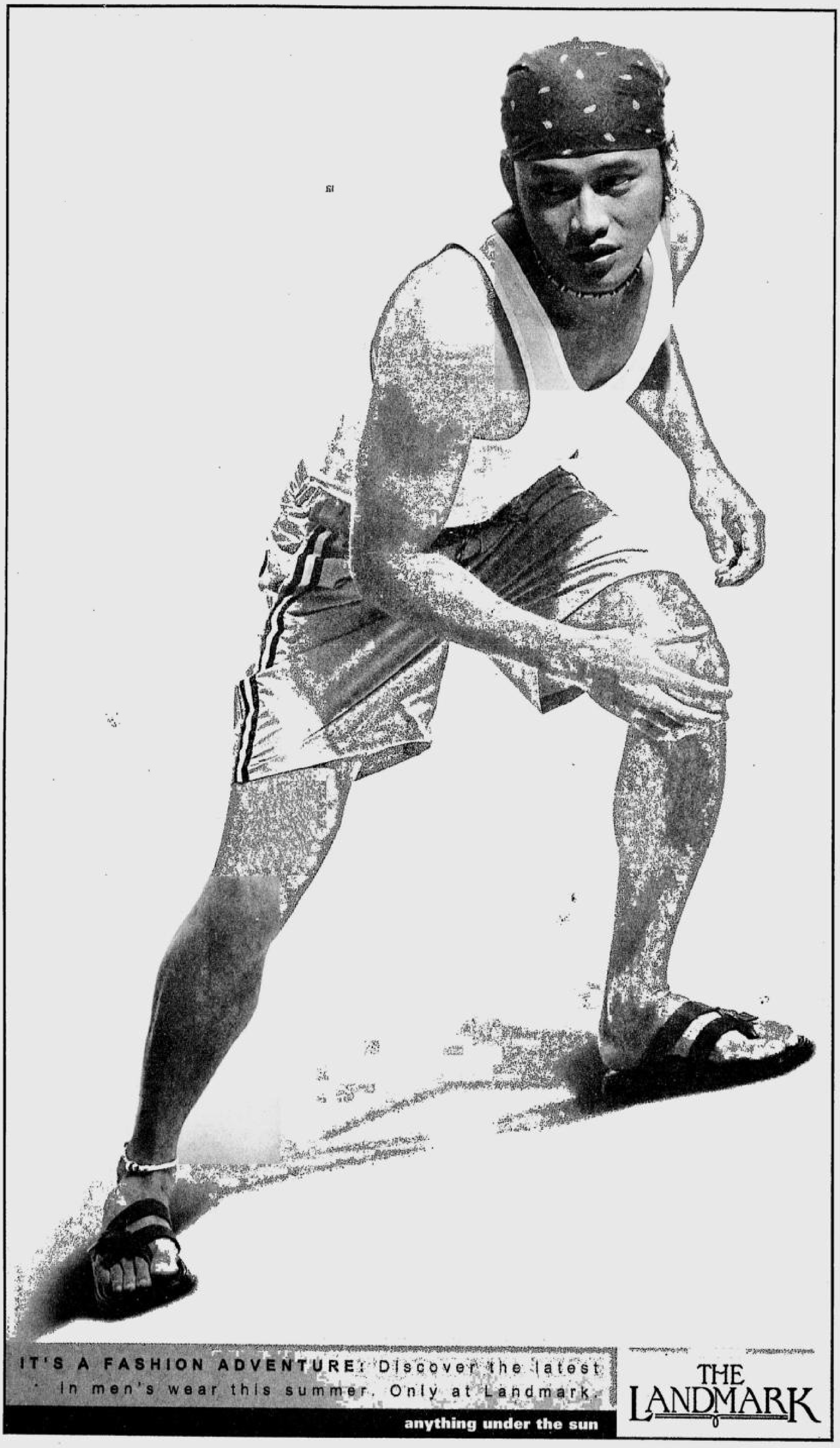
Not drunk

El-Debs said he was not among those who mauled Taoatao. He told ABS-CBN that his companions wanted the tape because they feared that their wives and girlfriends would see them on television having the proverbial good time in Angeles City.

El-Debs also denied that they were drunk when the alleged mauling incident took place. He said they simply had tequila and red wine.

He has reportedly offered a compromise settlement with the TV network by promising to compensate the crew and by extending a public apology.

Vice President and Foreign Affairs Secretary Teofisto Guingona Jr. has ordered an investigation.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Estrada . . .

From page A1

He was also expected to testify on his claim that Jancom had offered him $18 million in "commission" in exchange for his signing the contract.

At the hearing, Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen confronted Misamis Oriental Rep. Augusto Baculio, committee chair, if it was true that the House leadership had asked not to allow Estrada to testify because the leadership was "protecting certain groups."

"My information is that President Erap was willing to go but the House leadership does not want him to testify," Dilangalen, a known Estrada ally, said at the jampacked hearing.

At the start of the hearing, Dilangalen asked why Estrada was not around when he was expecting him to be present.

Baculio confirmed the Sandiganbayan's last communication with the committee that Estrada was going to attend the hearing. Baculio said Estrada himself had conveyed to the committee his desire to testify yesterday.

Baculio mentioned Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez, who he said called up the committee "to find out if President Estrada would attend the hearing."

Dilangalen asked if Gonzalez had instructed the committee to block Estrada's appearance.

"I don't think the committee can be instructed (as such)," Baculio said, adding that the invitations for Estrada and former President Fidel Ramos were issued by the committee on April 22.

Suspicious

"What is the interest of Raul Gonzalez here? I am very suspicious. I think there is something fishy here," Dilangalen said.

"I don't want to impute malice on the House leadership," said Baculio. He noted that Estrada was complaining that his mouth was painful because he had an "operation on his molars (on Monday)."

"As a matter of fact, President Erap has said he was offered $18 million through Robert Aventajado in exchange for signing (the Jancom contract). That is why his presence here is of paramount importance," Dilangalen said.

"A decision of the House to block his appearance will reflect the kind of administration that we have here," Dilangalen said.

"That is not true," Gonzalez said when asked by the INQUIRER for comment. He confirmed that he called up the committee to ask if Estrada was indeed scheduled to testify.

Query from Drilon

Gonzalez said he made the inquiry because Speaker Jose de Venecia and Senate President Franklin Drilon had asked him if Estrada was appearing yesterday.

Asked why the two officials wanted to know, he said he did not know. "Some people just want to give Erap a forum," he added.

Two sources told the INQUIRER that the House leadership did not want Estrada to appear in the hearing because it could create a "constitutional crisis."

Estrada had been attacking the Supreme Court for alleged bias against him.

The Jancom deal was revived after the Supreme Court upheld it as a valid contract. The high court, however, said the deal still needed the signature of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Ms Macapagal said she would not sign a "flawed contract."

Baculio said he had no choice but to invite Estrada because it was a motion approved by 12 members of the committee.

Aventajado's testimony

Though Estrada was a no-show, his former flagship projects adviser Aventajado testified at the hearing along with two officials of the Ramos administration who signed the Jancom deal on Aug. 18, 1997.

They were Prospero Oreta, former chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority, and Dionisio de la Serna of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council.

The third official who signed the contract was Victor Ramos, then environment secretary.

Baculio asked Aventajado to comment on Estrada's statement to INQUIRER columnist Neal Cruz that Jancom had offered him a 20-percent commission. Aventajado supposedly facilitated the offer.

Aventajado admitted that he had talks with Jancom at the time because he was in charge of an executive committee tasked with reviewing the deal.

"I think the actions that I took would speak better of how I dealt with Jancom. If (there was an offer) maybe I would have done something to favor Jancom but I never did," he said.

Aventajado gave a chronological report of his review of the Jancom deal, which he said he first referred to the MMDA because it failed to comply with certain requirements, including the Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC).

Aventajado said that aside from non-compliance with an ECC, the Jancom's tipping fee also exceeded the MMDA's financial capacity. He said the passage of the Clean Air Act was also a factor because it banned incineration.

He said that sometime in September 2000, he recommended to Estrada not to pursue the Jancom deal.

New bidding

Aventajado said his committee called for a new bidding on Sept. 25, 2000 but only two out of the five bidders qualified—Pro-Environmental Consortium (PEC) and Dizon Copper Silver Mines.

He said PEC was declared the winner when it offered a tipping fee of $18.9 as against Dizon's $32.

But Aventajado said the Estrada administration was unable to award the contract to the PEC because the Court of Appeals issued a temporary restraining order. The CA upheld the Jancom deal, which was subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court.

De la Serna, for his part, recalled that former President Fidel V. Ramos did not sign the Jancom deal because it was too close to the 1998 presidential elections.

De la Serna said Ramos did not want the Jancom deal to be regarded as a midnight deal of his administration.

But De la Serna admitted that the contract was signed in 1997 in Australia.

He said that during the last Ramos Cabinet meeting on June 23, 1998, the Cabinet approved a "favorable endorsement" of the Jancom deal to the next administration.

Tighter watch ordered over fake US visas

By B. Rivera

PHILIPPINE immigration agents will be "doubly strict" in examining the travel documents of US-bound passengers after more of them were found with fake US visas.

Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo yesterday ordered the tighter watch at all international ports, particularly the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, after three Filipinos were caught leaving the country bearing counterfeit US visas.

The Bureau of Immigration said in a statement yesterday there has been a proliferation of fraudulent travel documents because of the many people who are desperate to leave the country.

BI agents arrested Eugenio Bulacan, Janett Mendoza Cajumban and Annabelle Lisangan Dino last week for possession of fake US visas.

The three admitted paying P400,000 each for their visas. Bulacan was arrested on April 12 and the two women four days later.

Cajumban and Dino, who were about to fly out on Eva Air, identified a certain Arnel as the source of their fake visas.

During interrogation, the women said Arnel promised to escort them through the airport, but he did not show up so they purchased their plane tickets and went ahead with their scheduled trip.

Bulacan was about to board an Asiana Airlines flight to Seoul, South Korea, and then take a connecting flight to Los Angeles.

Domingo warned would-be travelers using fake papers that immigration agents have undergone intensive training to detect spurious documents.

She said the US Embassy conducted several training programs for Filipino immigration personnel to teach them how to detect fraudulent travel documents.

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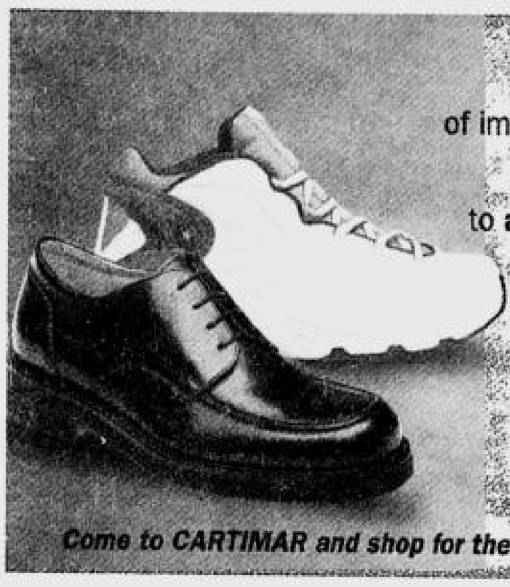

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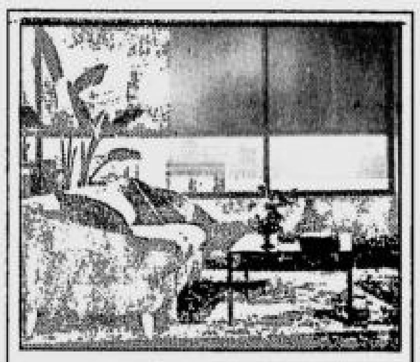

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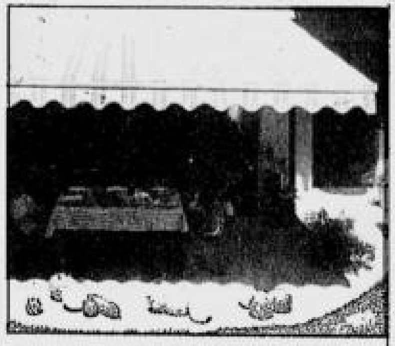

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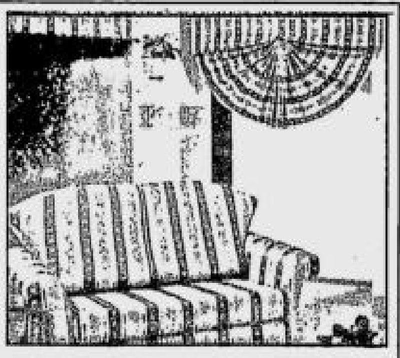

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Graceful exit for GSIS' Garcia?

By C. Esguerra

MALACAÑANG is shopping for a replacement for the president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System who has been locked in a conflict with employees of the state-run pension fund for his allegedly oppressive policies and mismanagement.

At a meeting with GSIS lawyers last week, Finance Undersecretary Inocencio Ferrer Jr. said President Macapagal-Arroyo was willing to replace Winston Garcia in the face of the employees' complaints against him, a source who was at the meeting said.

Last year, Vitaliano Nañagas, who headed the other state-run pension fund, the Social Security System, was replaced under similar circumstances.

But to give Garcia a "graceful exit," the Palace will use his health problems, not his conflict with the employees, as the reason for his departure, the source quoted Ferrer as saying.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Ferrer yesterday.

"He (Ferrer) told us to present proof of Garcia's ill health and he said he would present it to Malacañang," the source said.

"He said the documents we presented were sufficient for him to recommend Garcia's replacement," the source added.

Garcia yesterday said Ferrer had told him about the closed-door meeting with the lawyers, but the finance official did not say anything about his being replaced.

"He just asked me to react to the concerns raised by the employees," he said in a telephone interview.

He said Ferrer expressed some surprise that the employees were raising the health issue against him.

"I'm under a strict diet, but I'm healthy. I'll show you my latest blood test," Garcia said in reaction to reports that he was suffering from diabetes and a kidney disease.

1 million go on virtual tour of RP

TOURISM Secretary Richard Gordon may well wish that the more than one million Internet users who have reportedly visited a website promoting the Philippines were more than virtual tourists.

The "Wow! Philippines" website address, launched by the Department of Tourism and the multimedia expert Big Dipper Digital on March 6, is being shown in DOT advertisements aired over various international media outlets.

Much of the feedback has been encouraging, the site's webmasters have reported.

"This is just the start of Philippine tourism making its presence felt on the Worldwide Web," Gordon said.

"What we've built is the nerve center from which many other interactive applications would be generated."

The project is designed not just to showcase the best of the Philippines in terms of destinations but also to demonstrate the country's readiness to make use of information technology, the tourism secretary said.

Jerome Aning

All-out Bush support for RP tuna sought

By Gil C. Cabacungan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is using the Philippines' all-out support for the United States' war against international terrorism to obtain favorable treatment for the country's canned tuna exporters.

She has written US President George W. Bush asking him to give Philippine canned tuna exporters the same preferential treatment that Washington intends to grant to Andean tuna exporters.

Philippine Ambassador to the US Albert del Rosario said the President cited the Philippines' support for the US war against terrorism as a justification for her plea.

It would be an injustice if the US, which has sent its troops to fight terrorists in Mindanao, were to deprive Mindanao's canned tuna exporters of a market by giving preferential treatment to the Andean countries, he said.

Del Rosario said the Philippines—the world's biggest canned tuna exporter to the US after Thailand—was likely to lose about $100 million in annual exports if Washington pushes through with a plan to grant zero duty to Andean countries.

He said Mindanao has eight tuna canneries employing 17,000 Filipinos.

Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas has also made an appeal to Washington to grant the Philippines the same status as Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela in the matter of canned tuna exports.

Meralco to be taught a Power lesson

By Christian V. Esguerra

CONSUMER and civil society groups yesterday formed what they called the "biggest consumer coalition in recent memory" to protest the Manila Electric Co.'s plan to increase power rates.

"The time has come for us to unite and deal Meralco and the government a lesson on good manners and respect for the Filipino consumer," said Jess Arranza, convenor of the People Opposed to Warrantless Electricity Rates (Power).

Led by the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and the Kilusang Mayo Uno, the coalition will stage a series of protest actions to pressure the Energy Regulatory Commission into denying Meralco's application for a rate increase.

At least 12 groups are listed under the Power coalition.

They are asking for the "immediate and unconditional scrapping" of the power purchase adjustment (PPA) and the currency exchange rate adjustment (Cera), two items in consumers' monthly bills that they consider extortionate.

The PPA refers to the cost of the electricity that Meralco buys from the National Power Corp. while Cera represents the amount that Meralco is allowed to pass on to consumers to cover exchange rate losses.

Power will kick off its protest actions with a motorcade at 10 a.m. today, starting from the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City to the ERC office on Ortigas.

On Monday, protesters will hold the first of a series of "protest blackouts," in which electricity will be switched off from 9 to 9:15 p.m., at the Trabajo Market in Sampaloc.

The coalition intends to enlist the cooperation of the different Metro Manila barangays to widen the scope of the blackout protests.

The group has started a signature drive among Meralco consumers from all over the country.

At a hearing being conducted by the House committee on energy yesterday, Leyte Rep. Ted Failon asked Meralco president Jesus Francisco if the firm would accept payments of electric bills without the PPA charges in the face of a consumer threat to withhold payment of such charges.

Francisco said Meralco "will be forced to accept" the payments, but this would mean Meralco "would not have enough funds" to pay the power generation firms.

"The payments will be accepted but as to what action will be taken by the utilities is a separate matter," Francisco said.

Energy Secretary Vicente Perez appealed to Failon, who said he supported the boycott, and consumer groups not to go through with it. A boycott may be a "popular" move but would be like "shooting ourselves in the (feet)," he said.

"We are all feeling the heat... but let us not disintegrate into chaos," Perez said.

The energy secretary said everyone should instead work for "remedial measures."

Failon and Bayan Muna Rep. Crispin Beltran clarified that the plan to call for a boycott of PPA payments was a "last option."

Also yesterday, the IPP review commission informed the committee that it has completed the review of 35 IPP contracts but declined to reveal their findings because these have yet to be validated by "technical and other analyses."

There were 43 IPP contracts signed under the Ramos administration but eight have already expired. The committee is now reviewing the remaining 35 contracts. The commission has until the end of June to submit its findings. ***With a report from Christine Avendaño***

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Founding Chairman

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Election shock

EDITORIAL

THE ENTRY of Jean-Marie le Pen, the far Right French presidential candidate, in the May 5 run-off election for the presidency, facing President Jacques Chirac, was a political earthquake that shook the French political system profoundly.

Le Pen eliminated the Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin from the run-off after the first round of the French presidential elections in which Chirac polled 19.7 percent of the vote, Le Pen, 17.06 percent and Jospin, 16.05 percent. For the first time since the Fifth Republic was established by Gen. Charles de Gaulle, a mainstream party candidate was excluded from the decisive round of the polls, making way for the entry of a candidate representing an extremist right-wing fringe of French politics.

The first round of the elections was marked by the abstention of 28 percent of the voters, resulting in the lowest voter turnout in 40 years, accenting the disenchantment of voters with the mainstream parties—the Gaullists and the Socialists. The seismic shock of the elections was underlined by the fact that Le Pen, who had lost three previous bids for the presidency, rode to the run-off by advocating positions that were anti-immigration and anti-European Union, going against the idea of co-existence and integration in Europe.

Le Pen's breakthrough has alarmed the entire European continent. To call it a wake-up call is a mild statement. It stirred up nationwide protests in France condemning Le Pen's vote and alarm in Europe.

Le Monde newspaper said Le Pen's vote "wounded" and "humiliated" France. Trinidad Jimenez, foreign affairs spokesperson for the Socialists, called the outcome a "terrible news for France and all of Europe." This was echoed by Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Pique, who said that he was "extremely worried by certain instances that might involve a racist or xenophobic element." Even the conservative Daily Telegraph in London condemned Le Pen as a "venomous racist."

What raised alarm all over the continent was Le Pen's pledge that he would, if elected president, reject treaties binding France to the European Union, bring back the death penalty, build 200,000 jail cells and deport illegal immigrants. His tough position on rising crimes, which he blamed on Arab migrants, had a lot of appeal to the French Right, as well as the Jews and the left-wing working classes, who blame the immigrants for taking away their jobs. Le Pen fed these grievances and exploited the disenchantment over the failure of the mainstream parties to attend to the problems created by globalization and liberalization.

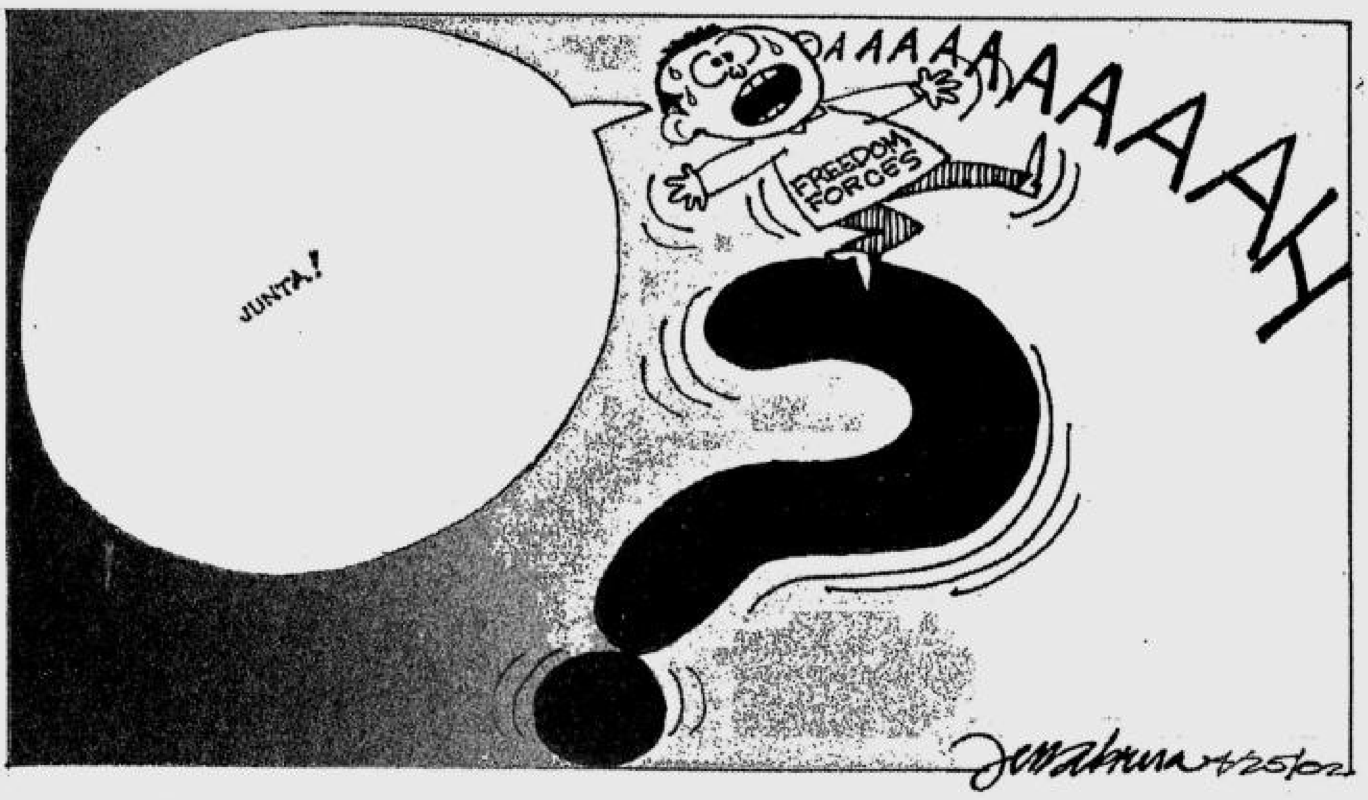
Since the policies of both the Gaullists and the Socialists have become indistinguishable over the further integration of France into the European Union and in the liberalization of trade, French voters found an alternative in the xenophobic slogans of Le Pen. The corruption that tainted both parties no doubt contributed to the alienation with mainstream politicians. The Sept. 11 terrorist bombings in the United States aided Le Pen's law and order stance. But what seems bizarre is that Le Pen won the vote despite outrage in the past over some of his notorious acts, including describing the Nazi death camps as "a detail of history."

Le Pen's vote has proven to be a windfall for Chirac's center-right party. It has forced the Socialists to realign their votes behind Chirac in the run-off in order to block Le Pen's election. The prospects are that Chirac would win the election by a landslide and it's possible that in the parliamentary elections following the run-off, the Gaullists might win a majority in the National Assembly, ending the five-year period of cohabitation with the Socialists.

In that cohabitation, the presidency was in the hands of the Gaullists, while the government was under the control of the Socialists—a bifurcation of power which only the French genius for innovation enabled France to avoid political gridlock.

One explanation for Le Pen's success was the fragmentation of the Left in an election in which 16 parties put up candidates. Many of the smaller left-wing parties took votes away from the Socialists after they were alienated by the centrist thrusts of the party's social and economic policies.

The shock may have been a blessing in disguise for France's mainstream politics. It rudely jolted French leaders to the realization that there is a wide gap between them and the grass roots which was emphasized by the record-low electoral turnout. But the French have always had the capacity for political renewal that has made them recover from humiliations and upheavals in the past.



The race for the post of AFP chief of staff

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

FREEDOM Force may be nothing more than a bunch of jobless people trying to scare the President into appointing them to choice positions, but if she is not careful in choosing the next Armed Forces chief of staff, the threat of a junta replacing her may become a reality.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has not made known her preference for the position but Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes is pushing for his protégé, Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu, chief of the Southern Command (Southcom), to replace Gen. Diomedio Villanueva who will retire on May 20, 2002. Reyes said Cimatu should be given a chance to become AFP chief since he would be retiring after two months while the other contenders, although more senior in rank and position to Cimatu, have a year or more before retirement and therefore can become AFP chief after Cimatu. This is a policy of accommodation.

Following this logic, Lt. Gen. Benjamin Defensor, Air Force chief, is now saying that he should also be given a chance to become AFP chief since he would be retiring in September this year. Defensor belongs to Philippine Military Academy Class 1969 and is senior to Cimatu who belongs to Class 1970. But the latter is older and will retire this July, when he reaches the compulsory retirement age of 56, ahead of Defensor and the other aspirants.

The other contenders for the top AFP post are: Lt. Gen. Gregorio M. Camiling, vice chief of staff; Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya, deputy chief of staff; Adm. Victorino Hingco, Navy chief; Maj. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) chief; Maj. Gen. Ernesto Carolina, Southern Luzon Command (Solcom) chief; and Maj. Gen. Dionisio Santiago, newly named Army chief.

The next AFP chief should be a senior officer who is still young, not a junior officer who is already old, said one of these officers.

Seniority is the most important factor among the various considerations in matters of promotion because it is a condition of rank and position. Contending officers are evaluated on their present position in the military hierarchy, whether they graduated ahead of the others in the PMA, and whether they were promoted ahead of the others in flag ranks, i.e. brigadier general, major general and lieutenant general. Overlook this traditional factor in promotions and you invite trouble. Naturally, those who would be bypassed will resent the "raw deal" that they think they got, and so you sow the seeds of discontent, mutiny, coup and junta.

"Presidential prerogative" and "deep selection" come in only when there are outstanding considerations that would obviate the more traditional concerns of seniority and proven leadership ability.

This is how the present contenders for AFP chief stack up in terms of seniority:

From the PMA viewpoint, Camiling and Defensor are senior to the others because they both belong to Class 1969. Cimatu was originally a member of Class 1969 but was turned back one year for deficiencies and graduated in 1970, together with Santiago, Garcia and Carolina. Navy chief Hingco, a direct commission officer, is batched with PMA 1969, and Abaya, a 1971 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, is batched with PMA 1971.

By virtue of position, Camiling is the No. 2 man in the AFP, and Abaya is considered the No. 3 man. Traditionally, however, the AFP deputy chief is viewed on the same level as the chiefs of the three major services, i.e. Army, Navy and Air Force, and it has often happened in the past that the AFP deputy chief is "promoted" laterally to a major service command because a field position—command over troops nationwide—is always preferred to a general headquarters staff position.

All the other contenders, therefore, are senior to Cimatu because he heads only an "area command." It is usually from the area commanders, and the other two-star generals, that the major service commanders are chosen.

Rated by rank, Camiling was promoted to brigadier general in 1995, as commander of the Philippine Army Light Armor Brigade, while Cimatu earned his star only in November 1997, together with Abaya, Garcia and Santiago.

Camiling earned his second star as commander of the 3rd Infantry Brigade, which was fighting the communist New People's Army in the five provinces of the Negros and Panay islands, on Oct. 16, 1999. Cimatu, on the other hand, became a major general one year later, on June 12, 2000, when he was deputy chief of staff for comptrollership; Abaya on Sept. 14, 2000 as commander of the 1st Infantry Division; Garcia on Nov. 14, 2000 as chief of the 5th Infantry Division; and Santiago on Feb. 25, 2001, when he headed the Special Operations Command.

Camiling had already been named Southcom chief and had been promoted to the three-star rank of lieutenant general when the others were just getting their second stars.

Camiling's first major staff position in the Philippine Army was as assistant chief of staff for training or G-8 in 1989. At that time, he was the youngest member of the Army General Staff.

Cimatu was named G-6 (or assistant chief of comptrollership) in 1992 when now Defense Secretary Reyes was Army chief, and was again named by Reyes as J-6 (or AFP deputy chief of staff for comptrollership) in March 2001 when Reyes was AFP chief.

Cimatu has trailed Camiling, Defensor and the others aspiring to become AFP chief in all aspects, and that is the reason the "policy of accommodation" Reyes is advocating to support Cimatu is being criticized by the AFP officers corps.

Traditionally, no officer who would be retiring within six months has been named AFP chief. The only exception was in 1986 when President Corazon Aquino appointed Gen. Rodolfo Biazon as AFP chief of staff. Biazon, however, reached the age of 56 three months after he was appointed and retired.

In the 1987 Cory Constitution, the term of AFP chief is set for three years. It also says that no law shall be passed extending the compulsory retirement age of military officers beyond 56.

Force of freedom

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I DO not share Jaime Cardinal Sin's bullishness about the Macagapal administration. "I am happy with the way President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is leading the nation," he wrote Teodoro Benigno the other day, after Benigno wrote a column suggesting that Sin had endorsed his group's plan to put up a "collective leadership" in lieu of the President. "It is not a perfect presidency, but I am happy with her performance."

Well, some leaderships are less perfect than others. How anyone can be happy with a President who has single-handedly turned back the hands of time and brought us back to the 1950s, with Americans pretty much running the show (I half expect Edward Lansdale to pop up with Ramon Magsaysay in tow), only he can say. Indeed, how anyone can be happy with a President who is trying to dispel the specter of Erap by doing an Erap—substituting show biz for substance, in the area particularly of doing something for the poor—only he can say. The only reason I can think of is that he helped put her in power, so he needs to protect an investment.

But I do not share even more Freedom Force's purposes. For a couple of reasons.

First off, even if the project of removing Ms Macapagal from power were worthwhile, I can't see that they are the best people to carry it out. Edsa I and Edsa II have one thing in common, which is that they were not only imperfect in every way, to borrow Sin's phrase, they also both did not live up to their promise. The leaders they spawned not only did not live up to the dreams of Edsa, they thwarted them. They frittered away a historic opportunity to turn things around. The leaders of Edsa I and Edsa II did not slay the ogres in the castle up the mountain, they became the ogres they set out to slay. Or for those who do not like metaphors, they did not become the opposite of the tyrants they toppled (or was toppled for them, in Ms Macapagal's case), they became, if not their mirror image, at least a dark reflection of them.

The people behind Freedom Force, and by extension the Council for Philippine Affairs (Copa), were part of the first Edsa, or its aftermath, which was the part when power was distributed. Edsa, as I will keep arguing, did not begin with the death of Ninoy Aquino, it began long before, with the death of those who raised a fist at martial law when it was not fashionable to do so. But none of their kin was around when power was distributed after Edsa. I did not hear the Copa-Freedom Force people complain when Cory, turning her back on a movement that dedicated itself first and foremost to championing human rights, which was the biggest casualty of martial law, unleashed the Alsa Masa and Norberto Manero's brain-eating cultists to fight the insurgency.

I did not hear them complain when Cory, turning her back on a movement that strove to end an epic reign of corruption, characterized by cronies, behest loans and large-scale larceny, unleashed her friends and *kamaganaks*—not least of them, her brother, Peping Cojuangco, a pillar of Copa—on the sequestered companies. Certainly, I did not hear them say that the government that arose after 1986 was no good, and the President deserved to be ousted.

Why now and not then? The only principle I can think of that drives these honorable men to outrage now is the time-dishonored one of self-interest. Then, they were too busy profiting to see, or mind, the perfidy. If this is the wise "collective leadership" that will rescue the country from its plight, I'll take the blighted individual leadership anytime. Less is always better than more, when harm is promised.

Second off, I can't see that the enterprise itself has any merit. Copa has denied that Freedom Force is its alter ego, and Freedom Force has denied that it has any intention of mounting a coup or overthrowing the government by force. But Sin's rebuke of Benigno—"I am not in favor of the 'collective leadership' that you were talking about"—must suggest the plan Freedom Force was contemplating was of a draconian kind. Sin has not been known to be naïve about politics.

I said before when Linda Montayre was threatening to launch an "Edsa IV" against Ms Macapagal that it was a thoroughly misguided idea. At the very least because it had the wrong premise, which was that you can summon "people power" at will, like a lackey. In fact, it takes a miracle to bring it about, which was what Edsa I and II were.

But even if it could be done, why mount one at all? Or in today's case, why mount any plan, within or without the bounds of law, constitutional or otherwise, to oust the President? I do not like Ms Macapagal myself. All she did was posture in the fight against Erap, all she does is posture in the fight against poverty. But that makes her only a bad President, not a tyrannical one.

There is a difference. A tyrant creates a compelling need to be removed at once and by force. A bad president does not. The complaint that we remove presidents far too often is a wrong one simply because the only occasions that we did it—with Edsa I and II—were sparked by oppression of epic proportions. The Marcos and Erap regimes were not just corrupt, they were rotten to the core. They did not just set the country adrift, they sank it to the bottom of the sea. They did not just grind the economy to a halt, they dashed the country's hope for progress to pieces, bringing distrust, anarchy and selfishness to rule the land.

Tyrants you remove by "people power." Bad presidents you remove by elections. The best punishment for an unelected and undeserving President who preens in billboards and P200 bills is to simply not for vote for her in 2004. That is all the force of freedom you need. None other.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Junta

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

JUST when it seems that the political situation was quieting down in this long hot summer, with the Erap forces unable to muster enough people power for his birthday or the first anniversary of his detention, comes an alleged plot by a group called Freedom Force to topple the administration. Composed mainly of resigned as well as current members of the Council on Philippine Affairs (Copa), the group seeks to defuse a "social volcano" which it says is about to explode, through a shift to a "collective" leadership. In a letter, released to the media by presidential adviser on media and ecclesiastical affairs Conrado Limcaoco, Jaime Cardinal Sin sought to dissociate himself from the group. Sin stressed that while he was all for reforms, he could not endorse a "collective leadership" and remained supportive of President Macapagal whose performance he was "happy" with.

* * *

I had a brief chat with Limcaoco, and he stressed that contrary to criticism by the group, which we shall refer to as FF, that he was out to destroy them, he merely did his job when he turned over to the President a copy of Sin's letter. Limcaoco's move was pre-emptive. The FF people claimed the cardinal had given his blessings to their movement in a recent meeting at Villa San Miguel, but his letter categorically denied this. Now it's their word against Sin's. But what the publication of that letter will do is discourage other groups which may be thinking of forging an alliance with FF.

Incidentally, some people read it as an indication that the Palace is not taking anything for granted that TV director-producer and PTV-4 consultant Maria Montelibano, whose husband Boy who is active in Copa, was eased out of the government channel yesterday. Official sources said the reason was the tight budget of PTV-4, which is chaired by Maria's niece, Mia Aquino-Concio, and that in fact all consultants' contracts were not renewed; but some people find the coincidence interesting.

* * *

Random thoughts on FF: The perception persists that some of its members are indulging in sour grapes because they have been left out of major government positions, and denials of junta plots may not be helpful at this point. The group is a mixed bag: aside from perpetual plotter Boy Saycon, Teddy Benigno and Peping Cojuangco, there's PR girl Joan Orendain, who has been Enrique Zobel's right-hand girl since forever. Police Chief Supt. Fiorencio Fianza is another interesting and controversial character. And what's Cesar Sarino doing with FF? Wasn't he just named presidential adviser?

* * *

Freedom Force claims that the country is "going to the dogs," and recommends a major political surgery with the installation of a "collective leadership" if the country is to survive the takeover either of the Left or of the Right.

That claim about the country going to the dogs is debatable. While many serious problems persist, e.g., peace and order, corruption, delivery of basic services, it's hard to accept that conditions have worsened since Erap's ouster. For one thing, there is direction in this government, unlike Erap's, and mistakes of the past are being corrected, e.g, the budget deficit was trimmed down to P145 billion in the first year of GMA's presidency from a high of P245 billion through tight fiscal discipline; and it hopes to bring this down to P130 billion this year. I sat through the two-day conference between the government's finance team and foreign donors, and the latter were unanimous in their praise of the administration's direction and vision and reforms being undertaken, although they stressed that many things needed to be done. Certainly the reforms have to continue and a lot of political will has to be exercised to keep them in place, but I can't believe that the country is going to the dogs.

* * *

Much is being said about the supposedly unethical practices of our media colleague Arlyn de la Cruz, who has been detained by the Abu Sayyaf since January. Much of this could be understandable envy over the way she had scooped a lot of media practitioners, but much of it is also hogwash. For instance, the talk that went around for some time was that she sold a story to the highest bidder. The fact is that the outfit that bought it, Reuters, did not offer the highest sum. There's also talk that our media colleagues have been indifferent to her plight. This is untrue. Many media organizations here and abroad have pleaded for her release, and this column joins the call for her deliverance from harm. Meantime, hang in there, Arlyn, you'll have a terrific story to write later. By the way, what's her outfit, Net 25, owned by the Iglesia ni Cristo, doing to get her out?

* * *

Sen. John Osmeña wants the Constitution amended to allow foreign firms 100 percent ownership in some fields, saying this would create more jobs for Filipinos. More jobs are desirable, but the contrary seems to be happening. A recent full-page ad taken out by a group of legislators, businessmen and civil society personality bewailed the fact that a growing number of firms have left the country or have shut down manufacturing operations and transformed themselves into mere trading or importing firms. I saw this for myself one day when I was looking for some bath soaps in the supermarket. I was shocked to see that most of the brand names we grew up with, e.g., Dial, Safeguard, Palmolive, Camay, Lux, are now being manufactured in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan and even Vietnam. We are becoming a mere trading post and our countrymen are losing jobs to Indonesians, Thais, Vietnamese and Malaysians. We have to support the Buy Filipino Movement and buy products made in our country.

Rooting out a 'sin'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT has taken years, even decades, since the first lawsuits against sexually abusive Catholic priests in the United States were filed, but finally the Pope has spoken out on the problem.

Sex abuse by priests, said Pope John Paul II in a rare meeting with American bishops, is "rightly considered a crime by society," and not just that, it is also "an appalling sin in the eyes of God." He added that there is no place in religious life for abusers, and expressed his "profound sense of solidarity and concern" with the victims and their families.

I don't know if the Pontiff's words are enough compensation for the pain, trauma and loss of faith that young men and women who were molested by men of the cloth underwent. As records of many of the cases reveal, the initial abuse and its emotional and spiritual impact were aggravated by the attitudes taken by those in a position to discipline the abuser—denial, righteous anger, emotional and spiritual blackmail, and finally a scramble to keep the scandal under wraps and even pay off the victims and their families.

What seems to have angered many American Catholics in the wake of the scandals, more than the incidents of abuse, were the many attempts at a cover-up by the hierarchy. Even after investigations confirmed that a priest was a pedophile, bishops merely transferred the erring clergy to other parishes and callously allowed them to continue ministering to children. By their silence and denial, and refusal to punish or isolate the priest-abuser, were the bishops acting as their "conspirators"? That would certainly be a legal precedent!

* * *

A REPORT on CNN, however, indicates that far from learning the right lessons from the priest-pedophile scandals in America, the rest of the Catholic hierarchy are seeking to distance themselves from their American confreres.

A Vatican official, it is reported, when asked about the extent of the pedophilia problem, said it was isolated and confined to a "specific geographical location."

An African bishop also spoke on-cam, laughingly describing it as an "American problem." This, despite documentation of numerous cases of sexual abuse by African clergy, some of whom were said to have coerced nuns into having sex with them, believing that the virginal nuns would not be able to infect them with HIV.

The Vatican summoned American bishops to a meeting only because the first lawsuits against abusive clergy were filed in the United States, and because the American media sniffed out the growing dimensions of the problem and followed it relentlessly. But that doesn't mean that the pedophile-priests are all American, or that children in other countries have not likewise been molested or raped by priests.

Unlike in the United States, though, those victimized by pedophiles and abusers among the clergy choose to keep silent and would not even think of coming out in public, much less suing the priest or bishop. The victims' silence, though, should not be used as an excuse for those in a position to do something to ignore the evil that is being done.

* * *

I'M sure that if they wanted to, bishops could ferret out the identities of priests grappling with sexual dysfunctions. After writing only a few columns on this subject matter, I've already received several accounts from adults who in their younger days had been abused by a priest, almost all of them reporting that the trauma haunts them to this day.

Some of those who've written said they felt compelled to talk about the traumatic incident(s), often to another priest, but were told merely to pray and forgive the abuser. But even if the victim chooses to simply walk away, that still doesn't excuse another priest, especially a bishop overseeing the abuser's pastoral work, from his duty to confront the abuser and to take steps to protect other children he may potentially harm.

I think a major part of the problem is that the priesthood is essentially a fraternity, where the prevailing view is that the "sin" of one is the "sin" of all. Certainly, there would be great reluctance among priests to talk about, much less submit to a formal review process, a fellow priest accused or suspected of sexual abuse. The possibility that one case will be used to blacken the rest of the clergy is always there. But in choosing to sweep the incidents under the rug, veiling the problem behind silence and denial, are they not responsible for the way it has spread?

* * *

ONE commentator has written that Filipinos should not "ride on" on the growing scandal in the United States because clergy sexual abuse is nothing new in this country. The progeny of Spanish friars have gone on to found dynasties of *mestizos* and *mestizas*, and such old skeletons in families' closets have ceased to shock.

To my mind, though, the fact that clergy sexual abuse has been with us through much of our history should in fact make us much more open to a discussion, examination and confrontation of the problem. And if, as the Pope said, sex abuse by priests is an "appalling sin," then should not rooting it out be part of the Church's mission?

Some people have said the pedophilia scandals are best addressed by revoking the Church's policy of celibacy for the clergy. I have my own thoughts on celibacy, but I don't think it has anything to do with this problem. Most pedophiles, after all, are married men with children, who still somehow must get their sexual "fix" from other children. The right response should be to protect children from falling victim to such abusers.

International Criminal Court: High time (2)

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

TIME is running out. If the government does not act fast, the Philippines will be left behind by the community of nations in the quest for universal justice for aggrieved individuals and peoples. We will be left behind in the *pansitan* of international opprobrium.

As I had mentioned last time, Rep. Etta Rosales and Sen. Loren L. Leviste have filed resolutions in their respective chambers urging the immediate ratification of the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court (ICC). This is in line with an international movement to protect the basic human rights of citizens and to prosecute perpetrators of crimes whom governments and domestic judicial systems are unable and unwilling to prosecute. The ICC could provide the venue for seeking redress, restitution and punishment for perpetrators of grave crimes against individuals, peoples and nations.

Senate ratification is urgent. There are two months left before the enforcement of the Rome Statute and a few months more before the meeting of the Assembly of State-Parties. The Philippine Coalition of the International Criminal Court (PC-ICC) is pushing for the ratification. (PC-ICC can be reached at ciccmedia@iccnow.org.)

What is the ICC? It will be a permanent, independent, judicial body created by the international community of states, through the Rome Statute, to prosecute the gravest crimes under international law, namely, genocide, other crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression.

Unlike the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which deals with states, the ICC deals with and has the power to investigate, prosecute and convict individuals. The ICC could be a forum for redress for crimes committed by individuals whether as part of or in relation to the government in power or of groups rebelling/aiming to change the status quo.

The ICC, unlike the ad hoc tribunals for Rwanda and Yugoslavia, is a permanent body based in The Hague. And unlike domestic or national courts, the ICC exercises international jurisdiction over criminals. This solves the problem of prosecuting dictators and other criminals who may have escaped from the national jurisdiction where they committed the crimes. Think of Chile's Augusto Pinochet.

Why the ICC? It's been more than 50 years since the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials after World War II but states and peoples have largely failed to get justice for millions of victims of genocide and punishment for the perpetrators.

After the United Nations was established, the newly formed International Law Commission (ILC) was tasked to codify the Nuremberg Principles and prepare a draft statute creating the ICC. The Cold War years dampened the progress of this endeavor. But a thawing in international relations in the 1990s revived interest and saw the creation of ad hoc international criminal tribunals, such as those created to address the atrocities in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

The UN has since then held several preparatory commission meetings on the ICC. Governments, non-government groups and international law experts were encouraged to give inputs. Women's groups were active in calling attention to gender issues and children's rights.

In 1998, 120 states voted in support of the Final Text of the Rome Statute seeking to establish the ICC. Twenty-one abstained, and seven voted against, among them, the United States, China, Japan, India and Israel.

As of 2000, 114 states have signed the Statute and 21 of these have ratified it, among them Belgium, Belize, Canada, Fiji, France, Ghana, Iceland, Italy, Mali, Norway, San Marino, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, Tajikistan and Venezuela. The Statute will enter into force once it is ratified by 60 states. In Asia, only five countries have signed: Thailand, Bangladesh, South Korea, Tajikistan and Kyrgiztan. Only one, Tajikistan, has ratified it.

The aftermath of the war in Bosnia, the genocide in Rwanda, as well as the Nazi Holocaust which saw the extermination of more than a million Jews are grand examples of the failure of the global community to stop the massive crimes against humanity. Since Nuremberg, the PC-ICC estimates that 14 million civilians have died in war-related situations. And the only sanctions imposed on erring parties were either embargoes or collective military force which often hurt innocent civilians rather than the offenders. The latter are often protected by their own states or remain so powerful that they avoid conviction in their own territory.

Only by holding these monsters and dictators accountable before the global community and an international court can they be prevented or made to stop. The ICC can serve as both a deterrent to crimes against humanity and a dispenser of justice. The budding Hitlers and megalomaniacs of this world will be neutralized.

World War II, and later, the Cold War have had their victims. In more recent times, there were the cases of human rights violations in the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and East Timor, to mention a few in Asia. Think of the war in Vietnam and the killing fields in Cambodia. And Afghanistan, 9/11 and the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

The ICC can itself also be a lofty expression of advances in international humanitarian law and human rights and their institutionalization in strife-torn countries.

Advances in science and technology, development in thought and art seem to be matched in speed by regression into brutality. The ICC can help bring back law and order into this world, and most of all, conscience.

Love duets

YOUNGBLOOD

Bernice Francesca L. Forbes

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I HAVE always been cynical about love. I have never believed in what lovers call "forever," and "Romeo and Juliet" makes me want to throw up. Some of my friends are tickled pink whenever they see a couple holding hands or kissing in public, but I just look on with a tinge of amusement and count myself lucky that I'm not committed to anyone.

Another thing I have serious reservations about is marriage. Almost all women are expected to marry. Everyone's afraid of ending up an old maid, and I just cannot see why they should be. Why further complicate your already complicated life with marriage? Why give up freedom for a commitment? Marriage. It sounds so final. It's like locking yourself in and throwing away the key. With all the news we're getting about marital rape, wife battering and other forms of abuse, there's always that gnawing fear and horrible possibility that you could end up with another sadistic maniac.

My grandfather died on Oct. 15, 1995 at the age of 82. His death somehow brought fresh realizations and gave me a deeper insight into love.

I was never really close to my Lolo Sening. We never went out to watch a movie. We never had a serious talk, and I didn't catch any pearls of wisdom from him. But one thing I do know: he lived life and loved it, and he loved my grandmother even more. I think those are the only great things that can be said of a man.

I have very few recollections of my grandfather when he was still alive. Maybe because the few that stuck to my mind are the only ones I really need to know.

We live in Manila, and during vacations we would visit my maternal grandparents in Batangas. I can still remember them dancing the tango and the cha-cha after dinner in the living room. Lolo Sening was so energetic, so full of life. It was enough to set you off imagining how he was in his youth.

I also remember that he and my lola used to sing love duets. Among their favorites were songs from the 1950s like "Let me Call you Sweetheart," "When You Leave, Don't Cry," and "It's a Sin to Tell a Lie." These songs always reminded me of gentler days when the air was fresher, the nights calmer and people could still make sense of things.

When Lolo Sening got bedridden in 1995, my Lola Sioneng never left his side. She was always there taking care of him, feeding him, bathing him and praying for him. Sometimes she would dance the tango or cha-cha with my lolo, even if he could only move his wheelchair from side to side. During those days too, they still sang their old love songs, even if my lolo could hardly speak. Sometimes my lola would sing those songs by herself, like a lullaby to my grandfather. He always thanked my lola after she had bathed him or fed him and he constantly told her how much he loved her.

We learned of his death only the morning after. I was told that he went peacefully and that he had the chance to kiss my grandma goodbye.

On the day of his death, my lolo received Holy Communion from the lay minister who came to the house every week. He was in a joyful mood, telling my lola, "I love you. I love you! Pray for me." Then he sang, "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and another song which went like this:

When you leave don't make me cry/
don't leave me dear and say goodbye.
When you say you love me too,
like the way that I love you,
hold me tight and whisper dear,
it's you alone my heart would care
and forever and ever dear
that I know you are sincere.

Lolo Sening had a slight fever that evening and he was feeling cold, so Lola Sioneng planned to take him to the hospital. She did not have the slightest idea that my lolo would pass away at that time. He just closed his eyes and breathed his last.

At the requiem Mass, the choir was requested to sing the love songs of my grandparents. Upon hearing those songs again, I suddenly conjured up this image that I witnessed several months before my lolo passed away: They were singing one of their love songs. My lola was smiling and my lolo was holding her hands tightly. He was trying to sing, too, but his words were hardly audible. He was crying.

My grandparents shared between them something serene, pure and beautiful, something stronger than emotion and deeper than thought. It was so innocent and so remote from all the evil around us.

This kind of untainted loving is something we need more of these days, what with all the separations and divorces going on. Love is not a sign of growing up. Rather, it is frozen in space and time. It is like a marble bust built centuries ago which remains intact.

"Romeo and Juliet" still makes me want to throw up and I'm still scared stiff of marriage. But I have realized that love is not wasting away or killing yourself when the person you love has died, like Romeo and Juliet did. Love is learning to live each day as though the birds are still chirping and the sky's still blue even when your partner has passed on to the next life. After all, it is more difficult to live for someone than to die for him. Love is knowing how to take risks and not be afraid of its consequences.

Yes, the poet was right: "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

Bernice Francesca L. Forbes, 24, is a medical student at the University of Santo Tomas. She wrote this piece originally as a letter to her lola five years ago on the first anniversary of her lolo's death

THEY SAID

Foul negligence

"They have the gall to attend a press conference but their victims are all here, suffering because of their monumental negligence."
—Salvacion Penales, sister of two survivors of the MV Maria Carmela tragedy

More talk, less work

"The country needs more work and less talk. The charter change will mean more talk and less work."
—Education Secretary Raul Roco

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Every day should be Earth Day

HOW can we observe Earth Day 2002 or celebrate it with over 200 countries all over the world when there is no peace but conflicts? When there is population explosion in areas already overpopulated and when there is poverty everywhere?

When we started making the first wake-up call for environmental decay in the Philippines 13 years ago, we believed that was the right time to start. And we were happy that hundreds or thousands of NGOs have been formed to answer that call in one way or the other.

But were there significant improvements? Did we increase our forest cover? Did we clean our rivers, lakes and seas? Did we reduce pollution in the metropolis? Are there more fishes swimming in the deep seas? Have dynamite and cyanide fishing been stopped? Are we able to stop the entry of hazardous chemicals into the country? Do we have a better waste management system? Did we reduce, reuse and recycle? More questions, fewer answers.

We are now into the fourth administration since we sounded the call. Have we made the first move? Of course yes, lots of it: ceremonial tree planting with pictures and films, etc.

Greed has been the culprit. We need not say much for we will waste ink and paper only in detailing it.

Personally, it is hard to get into the consciousness of a hungry and angry individual about saving Mother Earth when he cannot even save his own mother.

Doing it during these troubled times is still possible. It starts with us. It should not be on Earth Day only. It should be every day.

—LUIS T. ARRIOLA, founder and president, The Earth Centre, Prince Plaza 2, Legaspi cor. De la Rosa Streets, Legaspi Village, Makati City

Surveys only measure level of political consciousness

THE RECENT Social Weather Stations survey shows that a significant majority of 1,200 respondents approve of the US military presence and indefinite stay in Basilan.

In 1969 a majority of the same number of respondents would have favored the reelection of Ferdinand Marcos as president. In May 1998 a similar majority would have said that they would vote for Erap Estrada as president because he was "*para sa mahirap*."

Given the abject socio-economic conditions today, it is a certainty that a bigger majority of respondents would favor US statehood for the Philippines. The same majority would most likely agree to change his/her citizenship from Filipino to American.

On the issue of whether *jueteng* is good for the life and soul of the Filipino people, a majority would most likely take the affirmative side.

The SWS survey does not really touch on the merits of the US military presence in Basilan. It merely reflects the level of political consciousness and social awareness of the 1,200 respondents.

If the SWS survey was addressed to 1,200 informed and enlightened respondents, the results would have been different. A similar survey conducted among the people of Okinawa (where 75 percent of US forces in Japan are located) would most probably produce different results.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will certainly exploit and squeeze the SWS survey results to the last drop because she is its principal beneficiary as the 2004 presidential election approaches. But what about the majority of the Filipino people who now wallow in the quagmire of mass poverty and wretchedness?

If US military presence (since 1898) is good for the country, as claimed by President Macapagal and previous administrations, then by today the Philippines should be in the lead position at least in Southeast Asia in terms of economic standing and military prowess. Sad to say, in both aspects our country finds itself today at the tail end among the countries in the region.

—DANILO P. VIZMANOS, 9391 Calantas St., S.A.V., Makati City

Embassy not doing enough for Aussies in RP

THE AUSTRALIAN Embassy was correct in issuing a travel warning to its citizens in the Philippines. It was wrong in saying, "Australians should avoid demonstrations and street protests in the capital." How would it know the goings-on here if there is no single Australian to supply feedback, such as I have provided in the past from the streets to those hiding in their secure offices?

The Australian Embassy was correct in warning of gangs who drug sex tourists in Manila. It was wrong not to warn them of the danger of fake rape for extortion. Albert Ernest Wilson was one victim. We got him off death row.

My embassy was wrong when it did not warn Australians about fabricated charges for drug possession, which also carries the death penalty. The case of recently acquitted John Martin of Angeles City is one case in point where the embassy was of no practical value on the lame excuse that it "cannot interfere with Philippine law." We didn't "interfere." We just got him off, and we are not paid like the embassy people are.

We deplore the fact that if Martin was innocent, the lying police must be guilty of perjury, as the judge pointed out. But no one has been charged for perjury and the lawbreakers are free to roam around and look for another Australian victim. The Australian Embassy condones this by not condemning it.

The embassy is correct in banning me from its duty-free bar because I might find out more, but surely the above is enough. This proves the point of the "Aussie arrogance" that we are accused of. While cowards do their worst, I do my best without being paid for it.

—EARL K. WILKINSON, Makati City

Why the shorter US stay for Filipino visitors?

DESPITE the results of the latest survey of the Social Weather Stations showing a decisive 75 percent of Filipinos supporting US military presence in combat zones, America's Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) officials went ahead with a 1930-type of policy, shortening the stay of non-immigrant visa holders with Philippine passports.

Are the days of V.S. McClatchy, when the unassimilability of the Filipinos and their undesirability as "immigrants," back? Or are the Americans anticipating a Kerensky-type scenario to occur in the Philippines? If so, does it mean that future Filipino "boat people" will not be given the same access enjoyed by their South Vietnamese counterparts?

Just asking.

—ERICK SAN JUAN, Suite 1402, 1st e-Bank Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

Nobody's buying what Ang is selling

MARKETING should never become synonymous to deception. Dante Ang is trying hard but failing to polish the image of his No. 1 client, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Ang's "Ina ng Bayan" is but a rehash of deposed President Joseph Estrada's "Ama ng Masa." Both are rhetorical. The only edge Estrada has is that his acting is better. Ms Macapagal is such a bad actress that she has earned criticism instead of winning sympathy. It's all very old hat and nobody buys it.

While Ang's boss makes an appeal to the masses, the shanties of urban poor communities in Sta. Mesa, Tondo, Santolan and Muntinlupa are being demolished, workers' wages and employees' salaries are still pegged at the same levels and land grabbing remains the main problem of many farmers. Add to their burdens the triple whammy of the oil price hikes, water rate increase and power rate hike. Ang doesn't seem to realize how hypocritical the idea is.

Sometimes, Ang's gimmicks are quite funny. Any farmer who has seen Ms Macapagal planting rice so daintily would see the joke.

Ang is Ms Macapagal's Kokoy Romualdez. The government reduces the media to being its mouthpiece. This is no genuine press freedom.

Ms Macapagal cannot get the support of the impoverished *masa*. Their empty pots and pockets will compel them to do otherwise. No amount of polishing can rebuild the tarnished image of an anti-poor President.

—RONALYN OLEA, national secretary general, College Editors Guild of the Philippines, Corner Ibarra and Dapitan Streets, Sampaloc, Manila

Tabloidish commentary on Las Piñas slay

RINA Jimenez-David's column, titled "Straight out of a soap opera," (PDI, 4/20/02) which compared the sensational killing of a nurse in Las Piñas to a soap opera, made light of a tragedy that has had such an impact not only on the family of nurse Belma Abella but also on the Lopez and De Leon families.

To ask David's readers to imagine Marybeth as the *contravida* standing in her living room, dressed to the nines, clutching a glass of wine, drawing on a cigarette and laughing is cruel and irresponsible. She does not even know Marybeth personally to make such a comparison. She has no idea how her tasteless comments affect many innocent lives.

David in her column, has perpetuated gossip and speculation, theorized on events about which she has no personal knowledge, and contributed to the banality of soap operas, confusing reality from television. She used her pen to elicit her readers to do the same. For shame!

I used to read David's column, but I will no longer do so. Her opinion has been tainted by her tabloidish style, sensational use of words whose only purpose is to play on the emotions of her readers and the families of all involved.

—TINA LIBORO-PIMENTEL, Vancouver, BC Canada

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Too far, too long, too little

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THAT'S fisherfolk describing their livelihood these days. Too far means they have to go further out into the sea before they can find fish. Too long refers to their extended stay out at sea and too little means no matter how far out they go, and how long they wait, the catch is always inadequate.

I got that description from Naida Pasyon, who works with Save the Children's population and environment project among coastal communities in Iloilo and Guimaras.

Coastal communities comprise about 60 percent of our population. Many of the fisherfolk live below the poverty line, unable to catch enough fish even for household subsistence. I visited some of the Save the Children communities a year ago and remember how bleak the shoreline looked. I've seen similar devastated coastal communities in Sorsogon, Bohol, Cagayan and even in what seems to be pristine Palawan.

Our oceans seem like a wide expanse with unlimited resources but the fisherfolk know better, as the "too far, too long, too little" description goes. This happens partly because of structural inequities with large fishing companies, Filipino and foreign, having rapidly depleted the resources, but the problems come too with population pressures on the environment.

I know it's become politically incorrect to use the term "population pressure," and for good reason. From the 1960s up to the present, there have been people, usually from developed countries, who have preached population control as a response to population growth. They have nightmares of hordes of Third World poor, reproducing too rapidly and knocking on the doors of the First World for aid, for working visas, for green cards.

This population control paradigm mainly targets the poor, including their lustful hormones, blaming them for their own poverty while evading questions of inequity in the distribution of resources, between developed and developing countries and, in the poor countries, between the very, very rich and the very, very poor.

We think of population pressure mainly in terms of the poor, living in congested slums. We forget that population pressure is a function as well of over-consumption, by rich countries and the local elite. We wait in the traffic in our Ford Expeditions and text our friends to complain, because there's no one else to talk to except the driver. In front of our van will be a smoke-belching jeep, packed with 20 passengers.

In interviews I conducted to get Filipinos' perceptions of family planning, many people said that it was all right to have as many children as you could financially afford. That's a narrow view. It doesn't deal with the questions of the mother's health—no matter how wealthy, a woman just cannot have children year in, year out, without sacrificing her own health.

There's a question of fairness, not just to mothers, but to the child, and other siblings. Can we honestly say we can raise 8 children and give them the time they need? (In fact, for those of us with only one child to raise, I'd dare say that even with the best efforts, there's never enough time to give.)

Let's take the discussion of collective responsibilities to another level. Groups opposed to family planning argue that there's no such thing as "population pressure." One American group went as far as arguing that 6 billion people could easily fit into the state of Texas. Hypothetically, I guess we could, but we'd have to ask why we would want to fit 6 billion people, like so many cows, into Texas. What does this say about our sense of responsibility for the environment, and for the people?

I have many friends, mainly in Western countries, who choose to have only one child, or none at all and instead enlarge their families by adopting children, often from poor countries.

Such decisions require a radical shift in thinking. Going beyond carrying on the family name or leaving one's genes behind, child-bearing and child-rearing become part of a broader ethos of responsibility for a larger community, and for future generations. Family planning becomes one of many decisions we have to make in life to help protect the environment and our common resources.

Too far, too long, too little—the phrase could well apply to so many other situations in the Philippines. The other day I was at Baseco, an urban poor community, and saw long queues of women and children, waiting to get water. I visited a clinic and interviewed mothers who had to walk half an hour through muddy paths to get a pre-natal and who said that if they had been pregnant and were about to deliver, they'd have to take a banca to the clinic, whose personnel would then rush them to the Philippine General Hospital. I also talked to mothers who could not get family planning supplies in the government's rural health unit because Manila's mayor forbids it.

We are told that there are enough natural resources in the Philippines to take a much larger population than our current 80 million. Sure, if Texas can take 6 billion, we could fit a few hundred million more Filipinos, with a few million to dispatch to other countries. We're already doing that with 6 million overseas Filipino workers. They too have to venture out, too far, too long. They earn much more overseas than what they would get here, yet given what had to be sacrificed, in terms of family and community life, the dollars and dinars will still come out too little.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

Moral cleansing is the need of the hour

POPE John Paul II has the moral integrity and ascendancy to pontificate on the scandals wracking the Church. His biography attests to this preeminence in living a healthy, clean life.

As a young man, he fought for and lived according to his convictions. Perhaps this is what is sorely lacking among many moral crusaders in America and elsewhere, especially in their fight for moral cleansing regarding sexual scandals: the moral crusader must himself be preeminently moral.

The cleansing of society and ourselves is something we must do. But perhaps the moral crusaders should be reminded of human history. A repetition of the Inquisition seems to be in the offing and moral crusaders are around us like Jimmy Swaggart, Jim Jones, David Koresh and Clayton Powell. Jones even poisoned all his followers with the promise of heaven, only to be exposed to have been running away from the horror of being found guilty of doing the very thing he condemned: homosexuality.

There is a joke that says moral crusaders are afraid of their own shadows. They cannot look at themselves and declare, "I am a morally upright man." But this debility is not a monopoly of Catholics. This is true of all Christians—Protestants, Born Again sectarians—and non-Christians, Muslims included.

So, do we need moral cleansing? Of course. But first, let us go back to family values—the personal and social values like respect for the dignity of man, woman and child are what we need. Prayer, repentance and honesty are indeed necessary. We need healing as a people, not a moralistic inquisition. Can we do that?

—FR. STAN A. SORIA, Parish of the Holy Sacrifice, UP Campus, Diliman, Quezon City

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Israel resists Jenin probe

No harm must come to Arafat, says UN Council

JERUSALEM—Israel threatened to block a UN mission to probe its devastating assault on the Jenin refugee camp, but opened the way for European envoys to visit besieged Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Wednesday.

Israel told the United Nations overnight it had changed its mind and would not admit the fact-finding team to Jenin unless it included military and counter-terrorism experts.

Palestinians, who have alleged a massacre in the camp, responded angrily, saying Israel's objections to a mission it had agreed to on Friday showed it had something to hide.

In the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces killed three Palestinians who tried to infiltrate the Jewish settlement of Netzarim on Tuesday night, the army said. Relatives named the three as Youssef Zaqout, Anwar Hamdouna and Ismail Abu Nadi, 14-year-old classmates from Gaza City.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said experts might be added to the team "as necessary" and agreed to postpone its departure by a day or two. He said in a statement he still expected the mission to be in the region by Saturday.

Palestinians have said hundreds of civilians may have been killed in the camp, including many whose homes were shelled or bulldozed. Israel has said it killed only a few dozen gunmen.

Twenty-three Israeli soldiers died in the camp, scene of the fiercest fighting of the West Bank offensive Israel launched on March 29 after suicide bombings that killed scores of Israelis.

"We believe the mandate of the fact-finding team should also cover, not only military operation of Israel, but the terrorist network which has flourished in the Jenin refugee camp and which, in fact, generated the Israeli military operation," Israel's UN ambassador Yehuda Lancry said in New York.

As Israel raised objections concerning the UN effort to clarify events in Jenin, it gave the go-ahead for European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana to visit Arafat, after denying him access to the Palestinian leader earlier this month.

Solana was due to visit Arafat's tank-ringed compound in Ramallah with the EU's Middle East envoy Miguel Moratinos and meet Israeli Defense Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer later in the day. It was not clear if the EU envoys would also meet Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who has declared Arafat an enemy.

The foreign ministers of traditional foes Greece and Turkey, staging an unusual joint peace mission, were due to visit Arafat and Israeli leaders on Thursday.

Explosions near Arafat's office on Tuesday, which the army said were caused by soldiers destroying grenades found in the compound, alarmed Palestinians and prompted concern among delegates at the UN Security Council.

"The members of the council expressed serious concern for the safety of Chairman Arafat," said Russia's UN ambassador, Sergei Lavrov, this month's council president.

"They stressed that there must be no harm to him or others in the compound together with him," he said after a special council session called by Syria to discuss the explosions.

Council members reiterated that the siege "must be lifted and Chairman Arafat must have full freedom of movement in order to be able to carry out his functions," Lavrov said. *Reuters*

US, EU at odds over warming despite meet

WASHINGTON—US and European Union officials on Tuesday resolved none of their fundamental differences over how to respond to global warming, basically agreeing to disagree, a US state department official said following a three-hour meeting.

"We agreed we have two different approaches," said the US official, who asked not to be identified.

The two sides did agree, however, to try to create working groups by June that would discuss "areas of common interest," including climate modeling and renewable fuels. The United States is the world's largest emitter of so-called greenhouse gases, mostly from utilities and factories.

Last year, the Bush administration announced the United States would not participate in the Kyoto Treaty, an international attempt to limit greenhouse gas emissions by industrial countries.

At the time, President George W. Bush said the Kyoto Treaty's goal of reducing US emissions by about 5.2 percent of 1990 levels during 2008-2012 would be too costly to the American economy.

The move irked the EU and other countries who embraced the Kyoto pact. In its place, Bush earlier this year unveiled a "Clear Skies" initiative calling for mandatory 70-percent cuts in emissions of three major pollutants by 2018 using a cap-and-trade system.

The plan, however, would not require reductions in carbon emissions from power plants and factories linked to global warming, which scientists warn could lead to massive flooding and rising ocean levels.

Holding their first bilateral meeting on the subject Tuesday, US officials met with Margot Wallstrom, European commissioner for environment, as well as representatives from Spain and Denmark. *Reuters*

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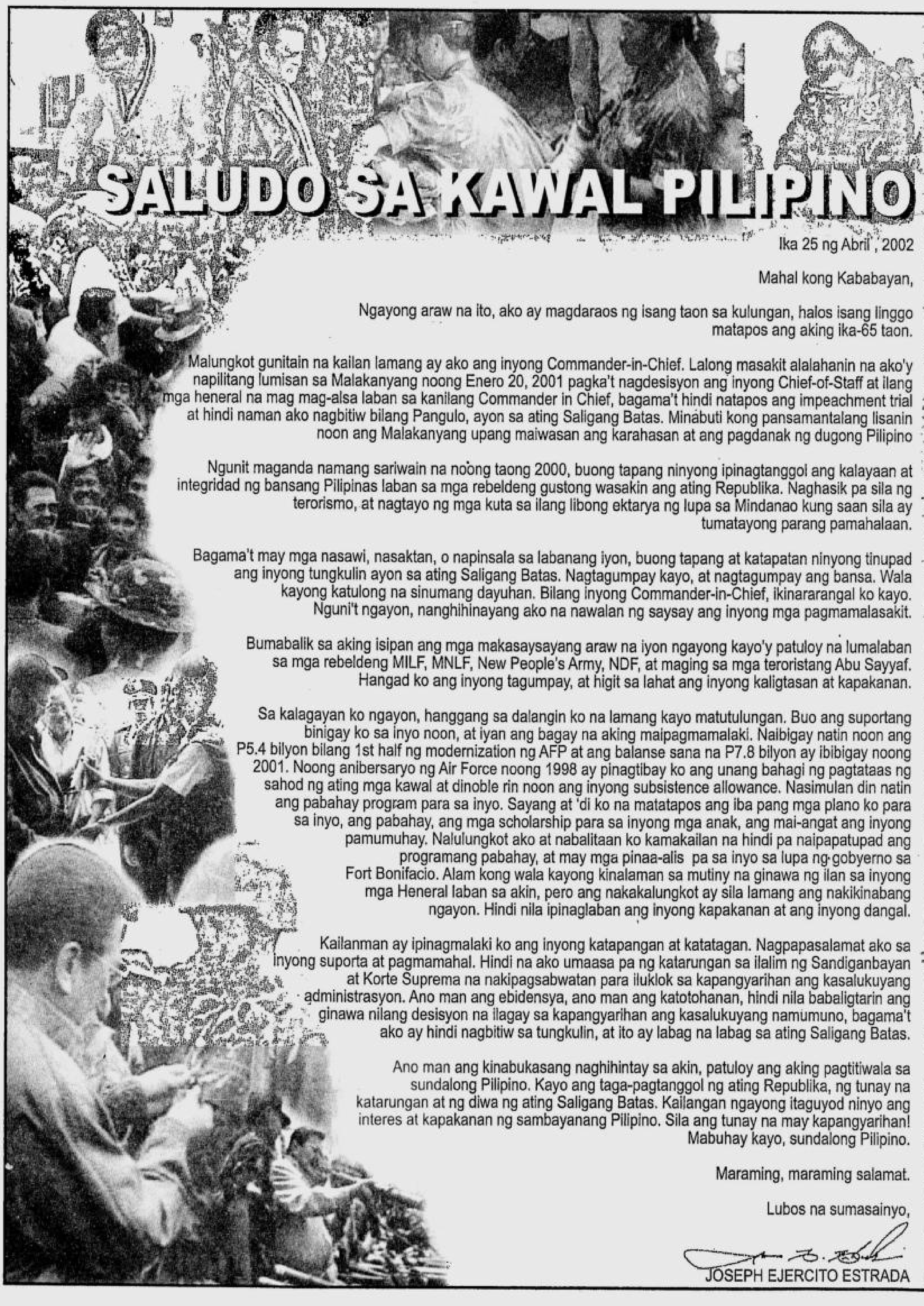

SALUDO SA KAWAL PILIPINO

Ika 25 ng Abril , 2002

Mahal kong Kababayan,

Ngayong araw na ito, ako ay magdaraos ng isang taon sa kulungan, halos isang linggo matapos ang aking ika-65 taon.

Malungkot gunitain na kailan lamang ay ako ang inyong Commander-in-Chief. Lalong masakit alalahanin na ako'y napilitang lumisan sa Malakanyang noong Enero 20, 2001 pagka't nagdesisyon ang inyong Chief-of-Staff at ilang mga heneral na mag mag-alsa laban sa kanilang Commander in Chief, bagama't hindi natapos ang impeachment trial at hindi naman ako nagbitiw bilang Pangulo, ayon sa ating Saligang Batas. Minabuti kong pansamantalang lisanin noon ang Malakanyang upang maiwasan ang karahasan at ang pagdanak ng dugong Pilipino

Ngunit maganda namang sariwain na noong taong 2000, buong tapang ninyong ipinagtanggol ang kalayaan at integridad ng bansang Pilipinas laban sa mga rebeldeng gustong wasakin ang ating Republika. Naghasik pa sila ng terorismo, at nagtayo ng mga kuta sa ilang libong ektarya ng lupa sa Mindanao kung saan sila ay tumatayong parang pamahalaan.

Bagama't may mga nasawi, nasaktan, o napinsala sa labanang iyon, buong tapang at katapatan ninyong tinupad ang inyong tungkulin ayon sa ating Saligang Batas. Nagtagumpay kayo, at nagtagumpay ang bansa. Wala kayong katulong na sinumang dayuhan. Bilang inyong Commander-in-Chief, ikinararangal ko kayo. Nguni't ngayon, nanghihinayang ako na nawalan ng saysay ang inyong mga pagmamalasakit.

Bumabalik sa aking isipan ang mga makasaysayang araw na iyon ngayong kayo'y patuloy na lumalaban sa mga rebeldeng MILF, MNLF, New People's Army, NDF, at maging sa mga teroristang Abu Sayyaf. Hangad ko ang inyong tagumpay, at higit sa lahat ang inyong kaligtasan at kapakanan.

Sa kalagayan ko ngayon, hanggang sa dalangin ko na lamang kayo matutulungan. Buo ang suportang binigay ko sa inyo noon, at iyan ang bagay na aking maipagmamalaki. Naibigay natin noon ang P5.4 bilyon bilang 1st half ng modernization ng AFP at ang balanse sana na P7.8 bilyon ay ibibigay noong 2001. Noong anibersaryo ng Air Force noong 1998 ay pinagtibay ko ang unang bahagi ng pagtataas ng sahod ng ating mga kawal at dinoble rin noon ang inyong subsistence allowance. Nasimulan din natin ang pabahay program para sa inyo. Sayang at 'di ko na matatapos ang iba pang mga plano ko para sa inyo, ang pabahay, ang mga scholarship para sa inyong mga anak, ang mai-angat ang inyong pamumuhay. Nalulungkot ako at nabalitaan ko kamakailan na hindi pa naipapatupad ang programang pabahay, at may mga pinaa-alis pa sa inyo sa lupa ng gobyerno sa Fort Bonifacio. Alam kong wala kayong kinalaman sa mutiny na ginawa ng ilan sa inyong mga Heneral laban sa akin, pero ang nakakalungkot ay sila lamang ang nakikinabang ngayon. Hindi nila ipinaglaban ang inyong kapakanan at ang inyong dangal.

Kailanman ay ipinagmalaki ko ang inyong katapangan at katatagan. Nagpapasalamat ako sa inyong suporta at pagmamahal. Hindi na ako umaasa pa ng katarungan sa ilalim ng Sandiganbayan at Korte Suprema na nakipagsabwatan para iluklok sa kapangyarihan ang kasalukuyang administrasyon. Ano man ang ebidensya, ano man ang katotohanan, hindi nila babaligtarin ang ginawa nilang desisyon na ilagay sa kapangyarihan ang kasalukuyang namumuno, bagama't ako ay hindi nagbitiw sa tungkulin, at ito ay labag na labag sa ating Saligang Batas.

Ano man ang kinabukasang naghihintay sa akin, patuloy ang aking pagtitiwala sa sundalong Pilipino. Kayo ang taga-pagtanggol ng ating Republika, ng tunay na katarungan at ng diwa ng ating Saligang Batas. Kailangan ngayong itaguyod ninyo ang interes at kapakanan ng sambayanang Pilipino. Sila ang tunay na may kapangyarihan! Mabuhay kayo, sundalong Pilipino.

Maraming, maraming salamat.

Lubos na sumasainyo,

JOSEPH EJERCITO ESTRADA

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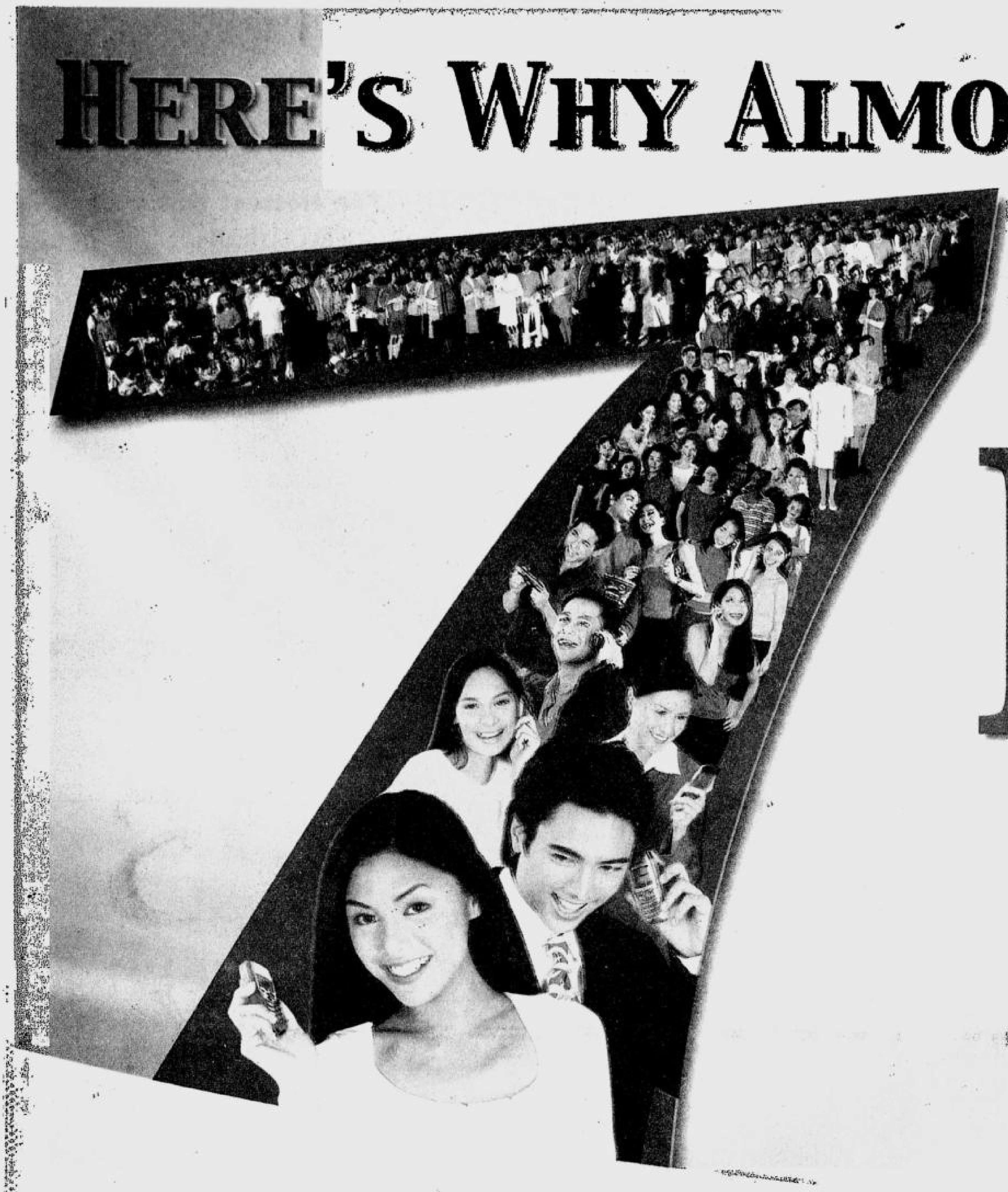

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Pentagon probes possible US military hand in V'zuela coup

WASHINGTON—The Pentagon is gathering information about what its representatives in Venezuela did during a short-lived coup there earlier this month but has found no indication US military officials aided or encouraged unconstitutional or unlawful actions, a spokesperson said Tuesday.

Sources close to the Venezuelan government's investigation said on the night of the coup April 11-12 the US Army attaché and his deputy were seen by various sources at Fort Tiuna, the military headquarters in Caracas.

"Were they there overnight Thursday and Friday? We don't know. That's what we're trying to assess and find out," Pentagon spokesperson Lt. Commander Jeff Davis said. "If they were overnight, that does not necessarily indicate anything nefarious was going on."

Davis said a 12-member US military group has an office at Fort Tiuna and the attachés traveled between there and their offices at the US Embassy.

"So it would not be unusual for them to be there," he said. "Additionally if there were something big going on—and the reports are there was a lockdown—it makes sense if folks were stuck there, they would stay where they were. That said we really don't know."

The Bush administration has adamantly denied encouraging the Venezuelan military to oust Chavez, a leftwing populist whose courting of anti-American regimes in Cuba, Iraq and Libya has antagonized the United States.

Venezuelan military officers forced Chavez from office after protesters were fired on as they marched on the presidential palace April 11. But the coup crumbled within 48 hours, and Chavez returned to power.

"The events on the ground occurred very rapidly so we want to make sure we have all the details," Davis said.

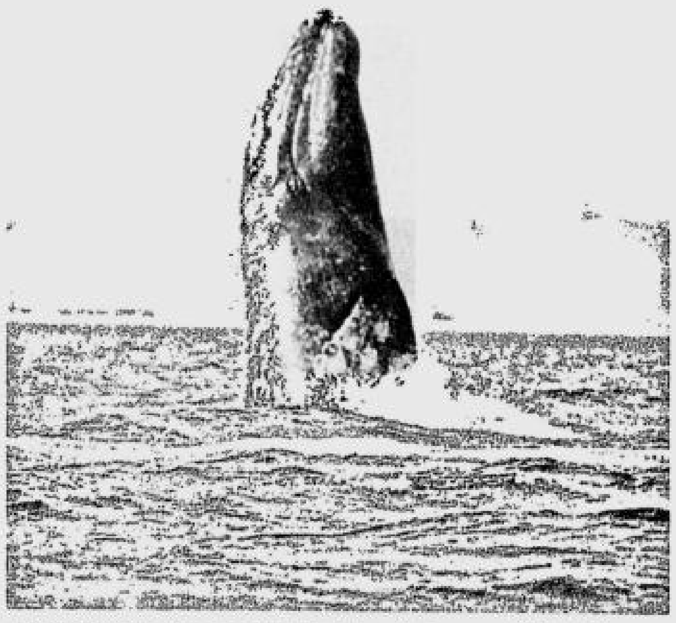
"All the information we have at this time indicates that (Department of Defense) personnel engaged with Venzuelan issues acted in a professional and proper manner.

"There is no indication or suggestion (Department of Defense) personnel aided or encouraged improper extra-constitutional or unlawful actions in Venezuela."

Davis said the effort to find out what US dfense dpartment personnel did during the Venezuela coup was an "informal gathering of details" and not an investigation or a formal review.

US government spokespersons have given conflicting accounts of the activities of the two attachés, identified by the Venezuelan sources as Army Col. Ronald MacCammon and Lt. Col. James Rodgers.

A state department spokesperson said Monday no one from the defense attaché's office met with anyone at Fort Tiuna from the afternoon of April 11 until Sunday. *AFP*



A GRAY whale breaches the San Ignacio Lagoon off the Baja, California peninsula in western Mexico March 8. Eco-tourists flock to resorts on the peninsula to witness the whales cavort in their winter home, where they migrate to mate and calve. REUTERS

Chirac junks TV showdown with Le Pen

RENNES, France—French President Jacques Chirac ruled out a television debate with his extreme right election rival Jean-Marie Le Pen on Tuesday, saying he would have nothing to do with a man who peddled hatred.

Le Pen, the shock qualifier for the May 5 runoff in France's presidential election, challenged Chirac to face him on TV in the traditional campaign showdown after surging into second place in the first round of voting last Sunday.

Underlining his radical nationalist stand, Le Pen said late on Tuesday he would hold a referendum to take France out of the European Union if he became president.

Le Pen told France 2 television he would also organize plebiscites to "stop and then reverse" immigration, end the right of babies born to foreigners in France to become citizens and give only French nationals social benefits.

"There can be no dealing, no compromise, no debate with intolerance and hatred," Chirac, the conservative incumbent, told a campaign rally in Rennes, western France.

CHIRAC

"Just as I did not accept any alliance in the past with the National Front, whatever the political price, I will not accept a debate with its leader in the future," he said, calling the contest against Le Pen "the battle of my life."

Le Pen, who won nearly 17 percent of the vote on Sunday in a political earthquake for France, has seized on corruption allegations dogging Chirac in his pitch to disaffected voters.

He had been itching to confront Chirac before millions of television viewers and swiftly accused him of running scared.

"I'd been asking myself what excuse Chirac was going to find to disguise his pitiful evasion," the 73-year-old former paratrooper said.

"If the President of the Republic doesn't have the guts to meet the adversary the people have designated, then he should change the people."

All mainstream parties have rallied behind Chirac for the May 5 vote, suggesting a landslide, but his refusal to face Le Pen on television could go down badly with voters.

A CSA opinion poll for Le Parisien newspaper found 69 percent of voters questioned wanted a televised debate.

Le Pen stunned most of France and alarmed Europe by beating Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin into third place and out of the race in Sunday's first round on a France-for-the-French platform that blamed crime on immigration.

Speaking on French television on Tuesday, Le Pen outlined his plans for a series of referendums to win a clear mandate for his controversial policies.

"The first referendum will be held on the totally abnormal institutions and links created between France and the Europe of Brussels and Maastricht, which have enslaved our country and emptied it of substance," Le Pen said. *Reuters*

2 killed in Calif train crash

PLACENTIA, California—Two people were killed and about 265 others injured Tuesday when a 1.6-km long freight train plowed into a crowded commuter train in southern California, officials said.

"The passenger train was heading into (a) station when it was struck by a freight train," said Sharon Gavin, spokesperson for the commuter train operator Metrolink.

Witnesses said the three-carriage passenger train had stopped when the freight train slammed into it head-on with devastating consequences, sending passengers flying through the air.

The crash was the second major train accident in the United States in five days, coming after four people died and 133 were injured when an interstate auto train derailed Thursday in the southern state of Florida. *AFP*

Indonesia to promote 'green' power plants

SINGAPORE—Indonesia's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources said on Wednesday that small power generators using renewable resources soon will be guaranteed a buyer in the state utility.

Promoting renewable energy as Indonesia's petroleum reserves decline and its air pollution rises, the decree will be issued by mid-May, Maritje Hutapea, head of the ministry's utilities division said via telephone from Jakarta.

The decree will force state utility Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN) to buy whatever electricity is on sale from plants of one megawatt (MW) or less using geothermal, hydro, biomass, wind and solar sources to generate power, Hutapea said.

While renewable energy may be good for the environment, it could hurt PLN, which is already cash-strapped.

"The cost will be more expensive for the utilities, but PLN was in on the decree talks from the beginning," Hutapea said.

PLN could not be reached for comment.

Countries worldwide are jumping on the green bandwagon, with the latest example seen in a US Senate deal on Tuesday to look at $14 billion in tax breaks to boost use of renewable fuels.

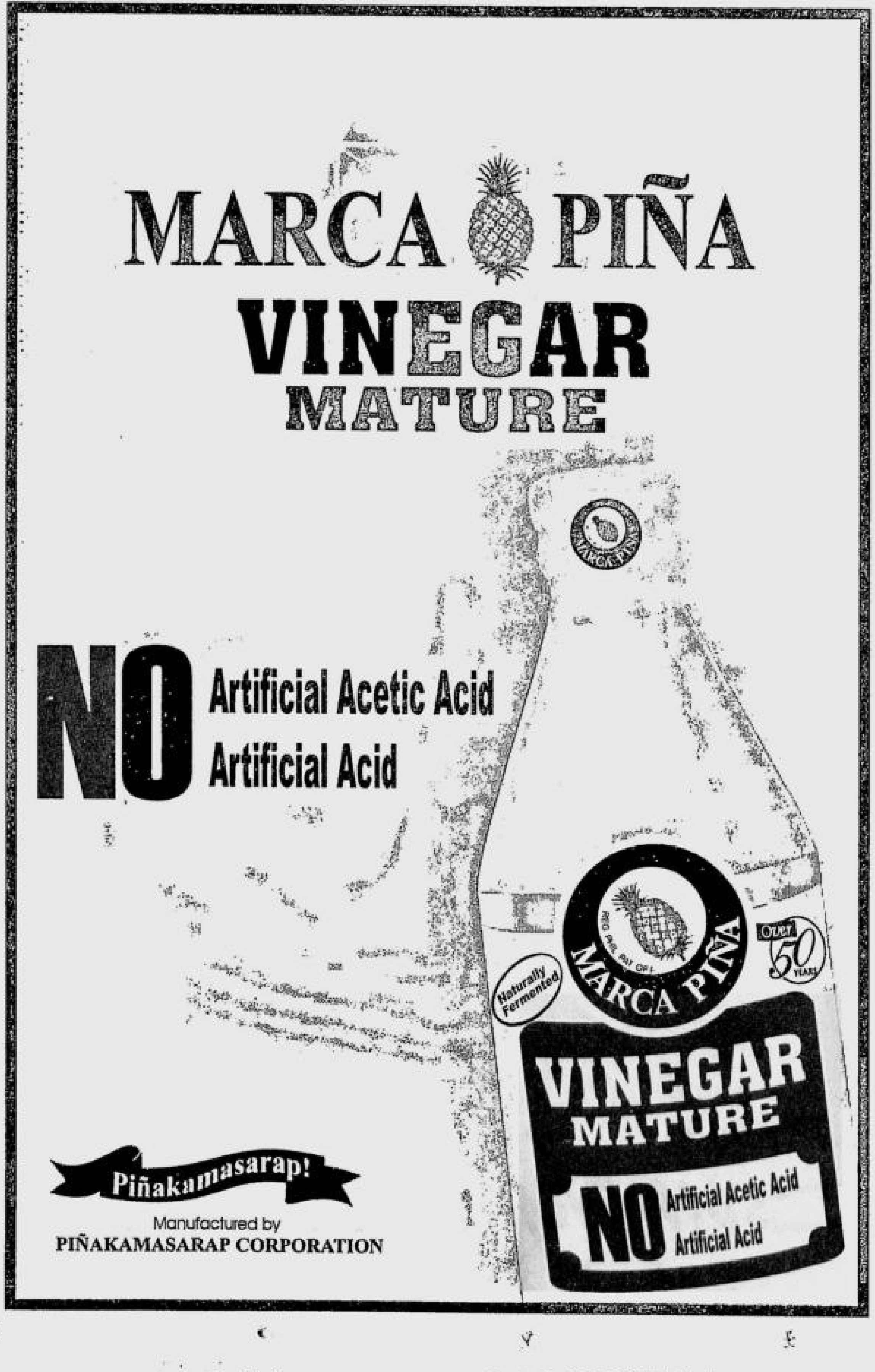
Indonesia's 1992 push for renewable energy investment failed because the government decree was unclear, Hutapea said.

Christopher Zamora of the Asean Center for Energy (ACE) in Jakarta was hopeful that the new decree will be clearer but said the challenge for green energy remains a lack of cash.

"Down the road the cost of electricity from renewable energy and conventional energy will converge if the government offers the right incentives," he said in a telephone interview.

For 20 years, Indonesia has tried to harness its many active volcanoes, but its geothermal energy is now only 802 MW, or four percent of its potential, according to ACE data.

Development slowed during the 1997-1998 financial crisis when the government suspended seven geothermal projects granted to multinational companies. But they have been slow to revive due to regulatory uncertainty, a US Embassy report said in February. *Reuters*



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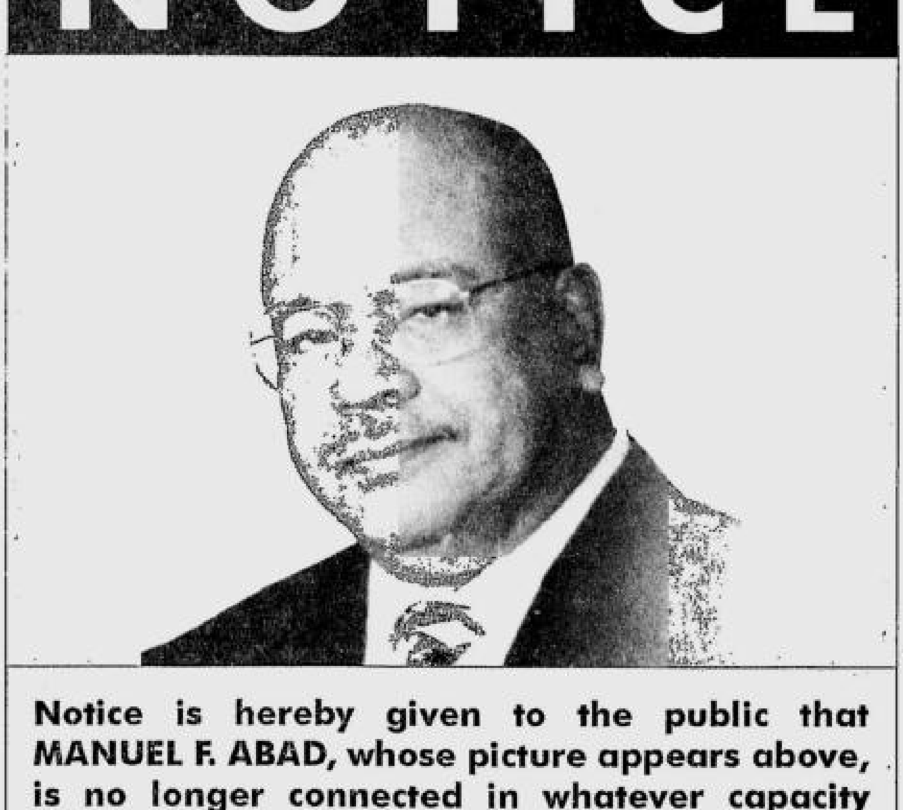

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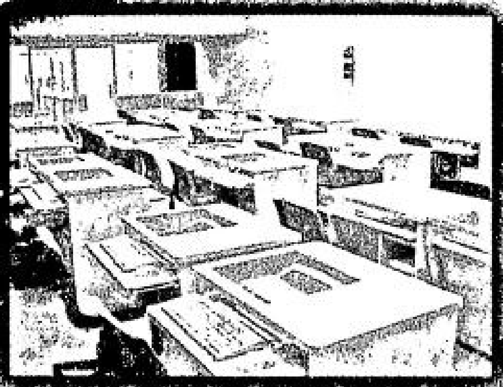

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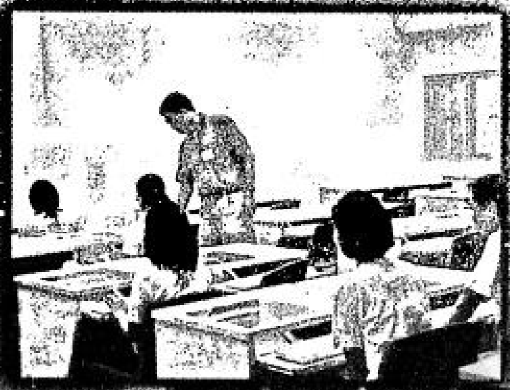

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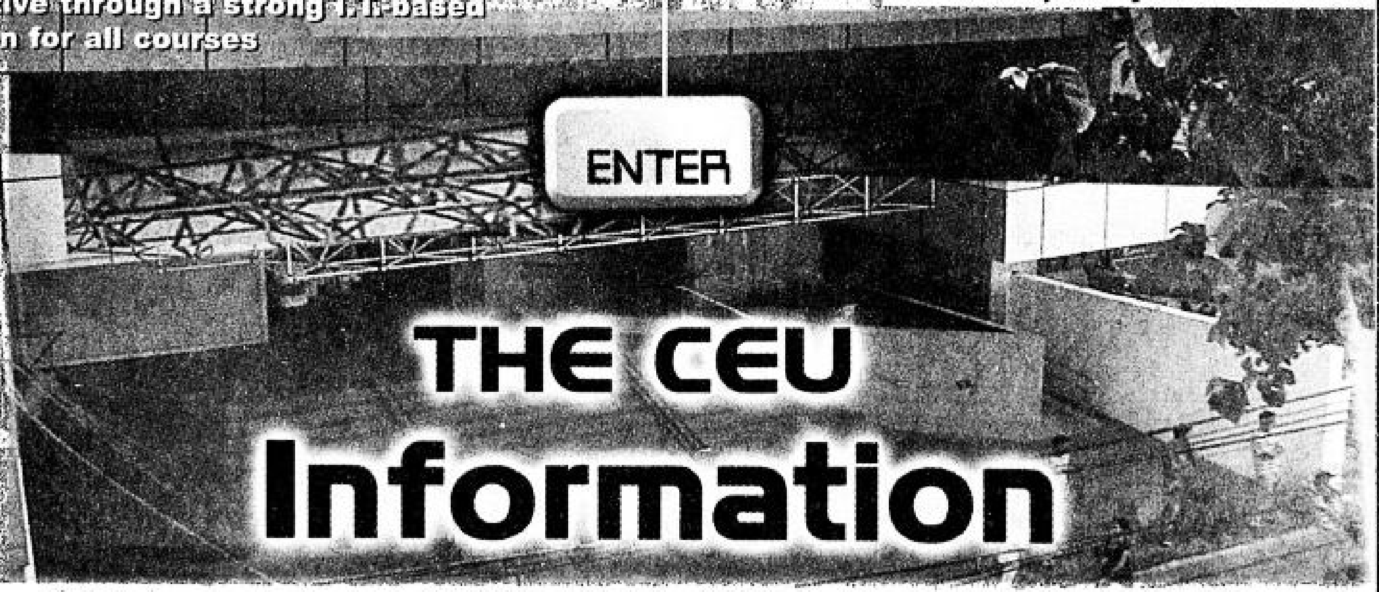

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI35° Lo 23°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 27° Lo 16°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	HI 37° Lo 24°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 24°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 35° Lo 24°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 22°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 24°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 32° Lo 24°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 32° Lo 24°
Roxas	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 25°
Cebu	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 32° Lo 25°
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 32° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 33° Lo 25°
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 33° Lo 25°
Davao	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 33° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/04/25/02

ROUNDUP

Village chief charged

ROXAS CITY—Illegal possession of firearms charges were filed against a village chief before the city prosecutor's office. The charges against Roberto Bacay, chair of Barangay IX (Railway) was a result of a police raid on his house on April 18 where two .38 cal. bullet shells and a sachet of suspected shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) were allegedly recovered. But Bacay denied the charges. "Everybody in my barangay knows that I am neither into the business of guns nor drugs," he said. Bacay said the two slugs seized by the raiding team from his house were used by his wife as souvenir items supposedly to "ward off" evil spirits.

Gerry T. Pagharion, PDI Visayas Bureau

Burned to death

ROXAS CITY—Three brothers died in a fire on April 18 in Barangay Pinamalatikan, Sigma town. The victims were identified as Ronel, 12; Harold, 6; and Ronnie Jr., 3; all surnamed Gardose. The children's father, Ronnie Sr., 30, was in the ricefield when fire broke out at about 10 p.m. Police said Ronnie Sr. left his children in the care of their grandfather whose house was just a few meters away. But the grandfather went to tend to his plants. When he returned, he saw that the house was on fire. The charred bodies of the children were later found amid the debris.

Gerry T. Pagharion, PDI Visayas Bureau

Accidental shooting

BACOLOD CITY—A policeman accidentally shot a fellow cop on Sunday night during the arrest of a person reportedly involved in a stone-throwing incident in Himamaylan City. PO1 Ernie de la Cruz was hit in the chin and was declared dead on arrival in a hospital in Himamaylan. PO3 Demetrio Garde was detained at the Himamaylan police station pending the filing of homicide charges. Supt. Geary Barias, Negros Occidental police director, said Garde was trying to arrest Jonard Castillo, who was accused of throwing stones at the Coke warehouse in the plaza. But Castillo allegedly resisted and Garde's .45 cal. pistol went off, fatally hitting De la Cruz in the chin. Garde said he and Castillo grappled for the gun when it accidentally fired. Castillo, however, claimed that the gun went off after Garde pistol-whipped him.

Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Measures vs El Niño

PILI, Camarines Sur—The El Niño task force, which the Department of Agriculture in Bicol has reactivated, recommended the stockpiling of palay to meet the rice needs of this town should the El Niño start ravaging farms. DA Bicol director Fe Laysa also urged farmers to plant early and use early maturing varieties, or those that mature in 120 days.

Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Roco at UPLB graduation

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—Education Secretary Raul Roco has exhorted the more than 1,000 graduates of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños to "strive and continue standing, trying to excel so that our country can once and for all rise and fly toward progress." In his speech during the UPLB's 30th Commencement Exercises on April 20, Roco urged the graduates to continue to strive for the good of the nation. He advised the graduates not to be materialistic and to value hard work, study and prayer.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Marijuana seized

MABALACAT, Pampanga—At least 13 kg of dried marijuana leaves worth P130,000 were seized by the police from a Benguet trader in a buy-bust operation here on Monday. Police arrested Elmo Caldad, of La Trinidad, Benguet, after he was caught selling marijuana bricks in the commercial district of Dau here. Police said Caldad was the fifth suspected marijuana trader arrested here since last year.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Roco at Samar Homecoming

EDUCATION Secretary Raul S. Roco will be the guest of Honor and Speaker at the Samar National School's General Alumni Homecoming on April 27 in Catbalogan, Samar. All alumni are urged to bring something for their Alma Mater, which lacks buildings, armchairs, textbooks, computers, teachers' manual and overhead projector and other pieces of equipment. This year's honorees are Class 1977, the "Silver Jubilarians" and Class 1952, the "Golden Jubilarians" led by former Leyte Rep. Sergio A. F. Apostol, now president, chair and CEO of PNOC-Energy Development Corp.

PDI fotog's ma dies

BAGUIO CITY—Pelagia Chiu Soberano, mother of PDI Northern Luzon Bureau photo correspondent Angelito "Toots" Soberano, died of cancer of the liver on Tuesday. She was 77. Soberano, of Asingan, Pangasinan, is survived by her son Toots and grandchildren Gia, John and Angelie. Her body lies at the La Funeraria Paz in Baguio City.

PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

35 mayors call NPA terrorist for execution of colleague

ILAGAN, Isabela—Provincial and local officials have condemned the murder of Jones Mayor Jesus Sebastian Sr. as a "barbaric act of terrorists."

In a manifesto, 35 mayors of Isabela expressed sympathy to Sebastian's family while condemning the murder of Sebastian, who they described as "a man of integrity."

Gov. Faustino Dy Jr. said the New People's Army rebels showed their "instincts as terrorists and hardened criminals" when they gunned down Sebastian at the lobby of the Jones town hall on Monday.

Dy called an emergency meeting of the provincial peace and order council on Tuesday where members discussed the death threats and the alleged harassment received by local officials from NPA rebels.

Dy said the NPA and left-leaning groups in the province have no reason to oppose social projects in Isabela like the proposed coal-fired power plant and coal mining, the cassava plantation project and the Magat dam fishery development project.

The NPA claimed that farmers and fishermen would end up losing thousands of hectares of farmland and fishing grounds if the projects are implemented.

Dy, who was among the officials on the NPA's "hit list" last year, said he was not afraid of the death threats from the rebels.

Aside from Sebastian and Dy, also among the NPA targets are former Isabela Gov. Benjamin Dy, Cauayan City Mayor Caesar Dy and Isabela barangay league president Victor Dy.

Ka Delio Baladon, spokesperson of the NPA's Benito Tesorio Command operating in Isabela, said they killed Sebastian due to his "blood debts" and alleged corrupt activities.

Baladon said Sebastian supported military operations and the deployment of the Citizens' Armed Force Geographical Unit (Cafgu) members in the town.

Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Alvarado, 5th Infantry Division commander, said they could not determine if the attack was in retaliation for the death of six suspected NPA rebels in separate encounters in Qurino and Isabela in February and March.

But Army reports said the group that attacked Sebastian also ambushed a group of soldiers between Barangay Linomot and Santa Isabel in Jones in June 2000.

Killed in that ambush were Col. Josefino Manayao, 502nd brigade commander, and 12 soldiers, who had just conducted a medical mission in Jones' remote villages.

The NPA has claimed responsibility for the execution of government officials in the past, justifying the killings as a form of revolutionary justice.

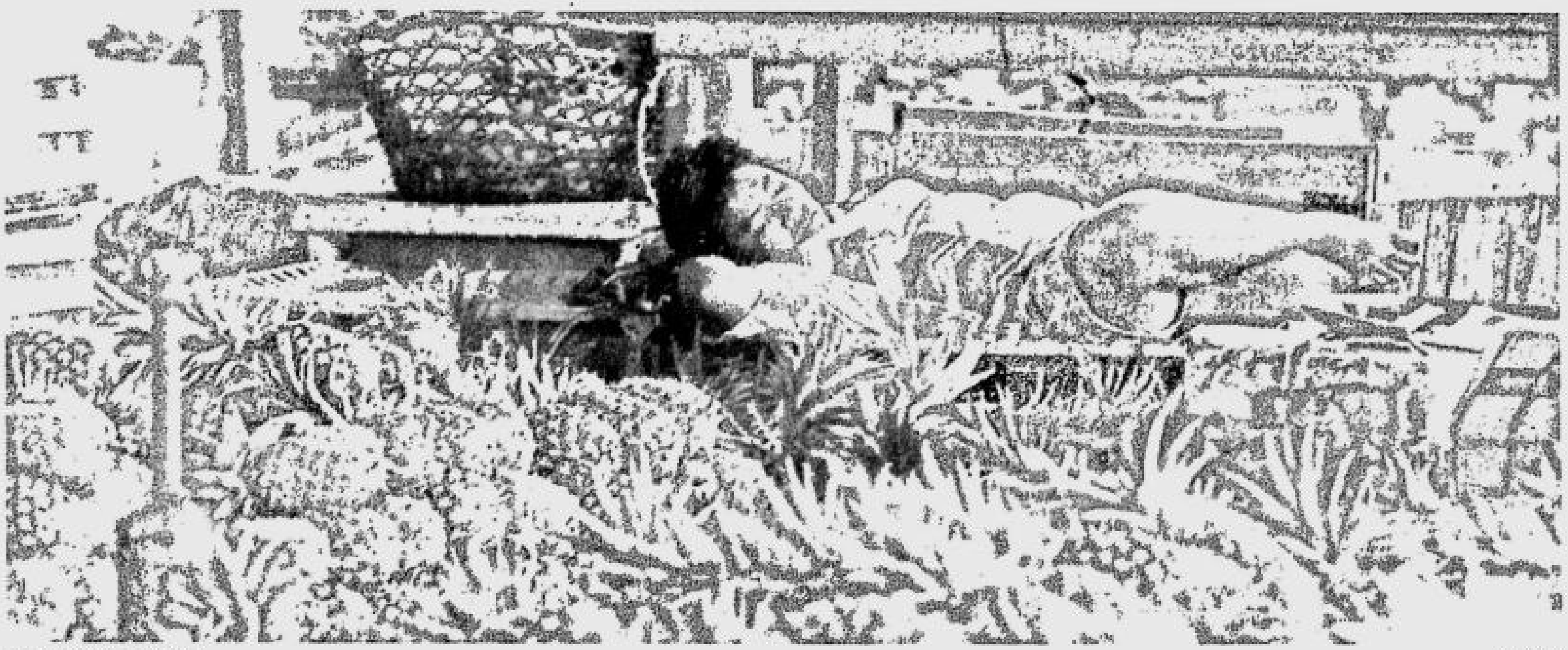
One of the most prominent victims of this kind of justice was former priest Conrado Balweg, who was assassinated on orders given to an NPA unit headed by Balweg's brother.

The NPA is one of the few remaining Maoist guerrilla organizations in the world seeking to establish socialist governments.

The group, however, was wracked in recent years by factionalism that led to the emergence of other socialist organizations.

A unit in the NPA, the Alex Boncayao Brigade, came under criticism during the early days of the Aquino administration for a string of executions of police officers.

Felimon "Popoy" Lagman, believed to be one of the leaders of the ABB that was then under the mainstream Communist Party of the Philippines, was killed in the same gangland-style execution. ***Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***



RYAN LIM

SUMMER FARE

Pineapples start to make their appearance in markets again as the dry season heats up. But business is apparently down as this Davao City vendor seems to say.

BALIKATAN BENEFITS

US soldiers vow to finish Basilan projects in 2 months

ISABELA CITY—The 357 US Navy Seabees and Marines are expected to finish their $4-million projects within 60 days, Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio, co-training director of Balikatan Exercise 02-1, said.

Teodosio said the projects would be completed "before the Balikatan ends in July this year."

He said the $4-million engineering projects will include the 60-kilometer circumferential road, not 140 km as reported.

"Our target here is to build a one-kilometer road every day, the timetable includes Saturday and Sunday, no rest," Teodosio added.

Aside from the 60-km circumferential road, the Seabees will also construct at least five water wells in Lamitan, Maluso and Sumisip towns; two bridges in Maluso; the improvement of seaport facilities in Maluso; and rehabilitation of an airstrip in Barangay Cabunbata in Isabela City.

Teodosio said because of time constraints, "we also tapped Filipino engineers, about 350 of them, to compose the Provisional 4th Philippine Navy Construction Battalion."

But Teodosio admitted that they expect to encounter more problems, like the onset of the rainy season in Basilan in June, road-rights-of-way and where to get construction materials.

"We have foreseen these limitations during the planning, but we have already tapped local government officials to do the explaining to the lot owners so that our work schedule will not be affected, while other city officials outside Basilan have already been informed of our interest to buy aggregate materials," Teodosio said.

But Fr. Angel Calvo, a Claretian missionary, said the planned developments in Basilan are not for the poor people but for the enhancement of the military's might.

"They just want to perpetuate themselves... that's all. All the engineering projects are (intended) solely to address the military's need and not (to address) the real issue of Basilan—the issue on peace," Calvo told the INQUIRER.

American troops are currently conducting war games with Filipino soldiers although some officials had admitted that they were involved, too, in the search for the Burnham couple who were kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf bandits.

The war games were also designed to eliminate the connection of Osama bin Laden in the Philippines, particularly the Abu Sayyaf. ***Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Taxes, piracy force closure of lone city theater

By Alex V. Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—A city without a movie house may be unthinkable to some. But unless the city government cuts amusement taxes by half, Dumaguete will have to get used to the idea.

The last theater in this city, the Ultra Vision Cinema, closed on April 17 due to high amusement taxes, the proliferation of cheap pirated Video Compact Discs (VCDs) and the unregulated showing of recent releases on cable TV.

Eduardo Tan, manager of Ultra Vision, told reporters here that even without competition from other moviehouses, they had to compete with the proliferation of pirated VCDs in the city.

Their sales were usually channeled to electric bills, amusement taxes and other operating expenses, he added.

City Treasurer Eustaquio Cesa said the city government collects an amusement tax of 23 percent from the gross sale of the establishment.

Three other moviehouses—the Park Theater, the Ever Theater and the V Cinema—closed three years ago, also after complaining of the high amusement tax.

The city government generated P3.8 million from amusement taxes in 1997 and 1998. The figure dipped to P2.7 million in 1999 after the closure of the three moviehouses.

The owner of Ultra Vision, GST Corporation, has been in the business of operating moviehouses throughout the Visayas and Mindanao since 1975.

Jackson Tan, a board member of the GST Corporation, said this is the first time that the firm closed a movie house because of financial difficulties.

Man draws life sentence for marital rape

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A regional trial court judge here sentenced a man to life imprisonment after finding him guilty of raping his wife.

Judge Anthony Santos of Regional Trial Court Branch 19, in his April 1 decision, sentenced Edgar Jumawan of life imprisonment for raping his wife Agripina twice in 1998.

Santos also ordered Jumawan to pay P50,000 for moral damages and P75,000 and P50,000 for exemplary damages. Santos told the INQUIRER that Jumawan has already appealed the decision before the Supreme Court.

He said before Republic Act 8353 was enacted into law in 1997, most marital rape cases ended in settlement.

"A wife of a prominent lawyer in Cagayan de Oro approached me and sought for my help. There was no law on that yet and what I did was admonish the husband," Santos recalled.

Jumawan raped his wife on Oct. 16 and 17, 1998, inside their house in Villa Ernesto Subdivision in Barangay Gusa here.

Agripina claimed that on Oct. 16, her husband forced himself on her. Agripina said she was then having a headache and abdominal pains.

The next day, Jumawan again raped his wife, who was then sleeping with their children in another room.

The frightened children went out of the room upon Jumawan's order.

At first, Agripina only filed charges of grave threat and slight physical injuries. But the city prosecutor informed her about the anti-rape law, prompting Agripina to file a rape case against her husband.

Edgar entered a not guilty plea during the arraignment of the case.

It was the second marital rape conviction in Mindanao. ***Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Dumaguete makes bid to reduce 'red tape'

By Alex V. Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The city government will put up a "one-stop-shop" center for the processing of business permits to spare businessmen from unnecessary paperwork.

City Treasurer Eustaquio Cesa Jr. said business permit applicants go through more paperwork than is needed at the Dumaguete City Hall.

He told a taxation forum here that some permits are not necessarily needed in January, when the business operators apply for mayor's permits.

Application for permits from the City Health Office, City Engineer's Office and the Fire Department may be scheduled for later dates because these offices are open throughout the year, he added.

To minimize "red tape," Cesa said the city would fully implement the One-Stop-Shop Center concept in business permits next year.

This formula, he added, has been implemented for seven years in Cebu, with good results. Cesa was city treasurer of Cebu City prior to his transfer to Dumaguete last year.

Details of the scheme were discussed during a meeting of City Administrator Dominador Dumalag Jr. and representatives of the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Along this line, office personnel will be trained on an "anti-red-tape" program.

Cesa said he believes that the "one-stop-shop" operation will double revenue collections because it would encourage more businesses to open.

Messages

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

I send my cordial greetings to the local officials and townspeople of Taguig, Metro Manila on the celebration of your 415th Founding Anniversary.

The occasion provides an opportunity to highlight your community's achivements for the past 415 years and to strengthen your bonds as a community.

Your commitment to the development of the Municipality of Taguig is a good example of the unity and leadership we need in forging social and economic transformation. Your concerted action to implement reforms in local governance, as exemplified by your commitment to ensure the success of this undertaking, is heartening. May you find inspiration in your achievements.

I hope this celebration will inspire you to pursue with greater zeal and resolve our common strength and vibrancy as a nation and a people depend.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Francisco Gold Condominium II BLDG.
Edsa cor. Mapagmahal St., Diliman, Quezon City

Let me extend my warmest felicitations to the town people of Taguig as they mark the **415th Founding Anniversary on April 25, this year.**

As the department that oversees the welfare of local government units, we have followed with interest the transformation of Taguig into a bustling and progressive municipality. And we note with pride how Taguig, like the rest of other LGUs in Metro Manila, has steadily shown what it takes to cope with development: teamwork and perseverance.

The government's thrust on good governance is aimed towards the efficient and effective delivery of basic services. And the Department of the Interior and Local Government as catalyst in national development has developed capability building programs for the LGU's to make them responsive to the needs of their constituents.

In celebration of your 415th Anniversary, it is my hope that your leaders will strive to work even harder in bringing integral development to your municipality, as well as gear towards building a society that is peaceful, progressive and stable.

God Bless and Mabuhay"

JOSE D. LINA, JR.
Secretary

PAMAHALAANG BAYAN NG TAGUIG
Tanggapan ng Punong Bayan

My warmest greetings to our townmates on our 415th anniversary.

Over the centuries, our town and our forefathers have played a major part in shaping the history of our nation. Taguig was one of the earliest established territories during the Spanish colonization. At the start of the American regime, Taguig was proclaimed an independent municipality. During the last World War, our townmates distinguished themselves with their courage and valor.

Today, Taguig has preserved its rich historical link with its past, while building a solid foundation for the future. Now, we direct our focus on creating the building blocks for a rapidly developing municipality.

We have prioritized the delivery of basic services to create a cleaner, safer and better living environment. We are improving the quality of education, computer literacy and sports development at all levels to make our youth more competitive in the global workplace. And we are building strategic partnerships with the private sector and other government agencies to address Taguig's resource requirements, be it food security, livelihood training or jobs creation.

Taguig also hosts some of Metro Manila's premier development projects. The Bonifacio Global City at the town's western end serves as our central business district with its high rise residences, offices, retail and entertainment destinations, international schools and con a 500-bed hospital and a 10 hectare Ayala commercial development along C-5. At the other end of Taguig, we find Laguna Lake and the road dike project designed to help eradicate our perennial flooding problem and spur the growth of a new lakeshore township In between the two we find an exciting mix of other development projects and vibrant local communities.

But above all, Taguig is about people. With our rich heritage and our unique mix of residents, Taguig truly is the melting pot of the Philippines. Taguig is a municipality of diverse religions, cultures, backgrounds and interests moving towards one unified direction.

With your support, Taguig will become one of the premier cities in the country.

I proudly salute you, the men, women and children of Taguig as we celebrate this historic day

Forward Taguig.

SIGFRIDO "FREDDIE" R. TINGA
Mayor

Bonifacio Global City:

A magnet for Taguig's prosperity

A most significant development in Taguig is the establishment of the Bonifacio Global City out of the vast area of Fort Bonifacio, headquarters of the Philippine Army (PA).

Owned by the Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., the Bonifacio Global City was envisioned by the proponents as a world-class city that would be comprised of a business district, commercial centers and an industrial zone for local and foreign investors.

In addition, the Bonifacio Global City was designed to house residential buildings in a setting where parks are abundant, with wide road systems and state-of-the-art telecommunications systems.

It is envisioned to be a community that combines business with pleasure, and the Global City has been home to many restaurants, entertainment joints and venue for large and small gatherings.

The city was planned to host many local and foreign corporations, and the design mirrors this concern for world-class amenities.

All buildings to be erected in the Bonifacio Global City are covered by strict rules regarding land use, height, design and even construction materials. This was done to ensure that all construction projects abide by internationally accepted standards on durability and strength of materials and resiliency to seismic activity.

> **"The Bonifacio Global City represents the next phase and highest standard in urban development in the Philippines. Its benefits extend to all of the more than 600,000 residents of Taguig, to the greater Metropolitan Manila region, and the Philippines as a whole. Hence the growth of the Bonifacio City must occur in tandem with Taguig's growth: *we are one community, after all."***
>
> ***– MANUEL V. PANGILINAN –***
> *Chairman of the Board*
> *Fort Bonifacio Dev't. Corp.*

In addition, a dual water system was installed that provides superior quality drinking water and recycled water for various purposes. This system permits a wiser use of water, with potable water reserved for people rather than plants, car washing, laundry and other activities.

The Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) has upgraded the power supply system of the Taguig side of the Bonifacio Global City. This is consistent with projections that there will be a leap in consumption once the city is developed fully.

Moreover, all the existing overhead power lines will be eliminated and these lines would be placed underground o the Taguig side.

New and upgrade main power lines, both high voltage and medium voltage, will run underground along the new C-5 and C-6 highways that run across Taguig.

Substations will be built and the existing one will be upgraded to handle higher demand for electricity.

By 2005, the population of Taguig is projected to hit 800,000, with 250,000 living in the Bonifacio Global City.

"FBDC is all set to welcome a new batch of locators-a combination of established brands and big box retail operators. In just two months after we have announced the expansion of Bonifacio StopOver, 60% of the avaliable space for lease have been taken up." Vicente C. Tinsay III, senior vice president for commercial operations of FBDC said: The new batch of locators includes Pizza Hut, Chowking and Delifrance. These outlets together with the current operating outlets of Shell, Jollibee, Starbucks, Hen Lin, Japs, Kameraworld, Ralph's Liquor Store and Le Creperie will service the growing number of office locators in the expected Hatchasia Global City Center.

MC Home Depot, a one-stop shop for construcion and furnishings signed a long-term lease agreement late last year with FBDC. Operation is expected to commence 4th quarter of 2002.

Another project consisting of two-storey multi establishment of dining and entertainment was recently signed with Sabre Development Corporation after the latter signed a master lease agreement with FBDC. The said project is located in the expanded retail and entertainment district of the Global City known as Fort Square. The concept for the expansion of the Fort Square includes landscaped open spaces designed to promote al fresco dining, open-air concerts and parties within the area. Operations of the dining and entertainment expansion is expected to commence fourth quarter of 2002. The availability of paved and guraded parking areas surrounding the area will also provide added benefits for restaturant operators and their customers as well.

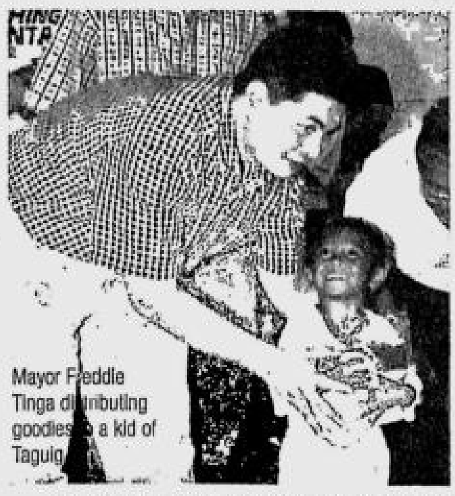
"With the expansion of the Fort Square, FBDC moves a step closer to creating a true "entertainment plaza" in contrast to the congestd environments of Makati, Quezon City and central Manila," Tinsay added.

More office locators are now operating at the e-Square, the PEZA declared IT Zone which now hosts the operations of completed office developments Hatchasia Global City Center as Nat One Center. Offices at the Hatchais Global City Center include Cypress Semiconductors, DFNN, Hatchasia.com, DEC Telecom Software Phils., Inc, Holy Cow Animation, Inc., Toon Works, Inc., Zip Claims, Inc. and soon the 500 workstations of e-PLDT's call center.

St. Luke's Medical Center is scheduled to break ground within the year for a 500-room hospital located along 32nd Street. Operation is expected to commence in 2004. The Manila Japanese School and the British school Manila is curretnly oeprating in the 300-hectare Universtity Parkway with a combined student population of 800. The International School of Manila(ISM) will be relocating its school operations to the Global City by Sapetember 2002. The 4-hectare ISM camous will house an initial number of 1500 students.

FBDC just concluded the sale of approxiamtely five- hectare property in the Global City in a cash and in-kinfd-transacation valued at approximately P2.5 billion which represents vote of confidence in the Global City's future consortium of developers plan mixed-use development.

Aerial view of the Bonifacio Global City



Mayor Freddie Tinga distributing goodies to a kid of Taguig

Young mayor transforms Taguig into Metro Manila's growth area

Mayor Sigfrido "Freddie" Tinga would have been making waves in the Asian IT market had he stayed on as group managing director of K2 Interactive, a company doing business in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Yet, Tinga left the company to pursue his vision of making his hometown, Taguig, into a hub of growth and progress. Rather than run a company with IT operations in four countries and consulting jobs with a variety of clients seeking e-business solutions and digital designs, Tinga thought that Taguig itself must be the focus of his attention.

He threw his hat into the political ring in the May 2001 elections and won promptly, giving him the opportunity to put into practice a plan to develop the town, attract more investors, and engineer a long-term plan to make the town a center of growth in the National Capital Region.

Many may not know it but Tinga worked for the town as early as 1992, when he became president of the Taguig-Pateros Livelihood Center. He managed the non-profit private foundation that provides livelihood opportunities for the people of Taguig and even Pateros.

It was his deep involvement among the people of Taguig that led him to believe that there is a reservoir of potential in his hometown, and that if people could be trained, they will become more productive and start the process of bringing prosperity to the town.

Tinga was completely correct on this score as the town has a treasure trove of assets, from people to a large swath of land that could be transformed into industrial estates and special economic zones.

It was this vision of socio-economic engineering that compelled him to take a more positive look on public service, noting that the town had within its territory Fort Bonifacio and other pieces of big-ticket property that could be transformed into productive areas that hum with activity each day of the year.

Tinga worked for four years with First Pacific and the Ft. Bonifacio Development Corp. (FBDC) as assistant vice president for business development. Among his achievements were the crafting of the city's IT Zone, e-square and secured the status of special economic zone (SEZ) for the project. He even planned the retail and entertainment sections of the huge First Pacific property.

So good was he in selling the property that land sales of $1.3 billion were made. He coordinated the strategic master plan for Fort Bonifacio along with the Helmuth Obatta Kassenbaum (HOK), a consulting firm.

A graduate of business economics from the University of the Philippines (UP) and a consistent scholar, Tinga was a member of the UP varsity baseball team that won the second division pennant of the Philippine Baseball League in 1985.

He took a master's course in business administration at the University of Oregon School of Business from 1989 to 1991 and majored in management as a Chiles Scholar.

From 1986 to 1988, he worked with Andersen Consulting (SGV & Co.) in the Philippines and Singapore as a technical staff. He also worked in designing information systems in production and manufacturing management. His clients included companies in the Philippines and in Atlanta.

He was a senior project analyst with Siemens-Nixdorf and developed banking and finance systems for many clients, including the Philippine National Bank (PNB). From 1991 to 1992, he was an assistant manager of the Technology Group of Citibank, N.A. and developed the bank's information systems. He also became a management associate of the bank for global consumer banking.

Mayor Freddie and his wife, Kaye, sharing their blessings through the soup kitchen program.

Taguig history: A patriotic past, a progressive future

Taguig was once part of Tondo, with its earliest recorded population being 800, mostly engaged in farming, fishing and trading. It has been said that Chinese traders also set up shop in the area, and chineware unearthed by archaeologists indicate that the town once had extensive trading with the Chinese who ventured from Manila Bay and down to Laguna Lake.

The people of the town were among the first to be Christianized, and was first headed by Alcalde Mayor Capt. Vergara from 1582 and 1583. Four years later, the town was turned into a separate pueblo or town as part of the province of Manila. There were nine barrios then, namely, Bagumbayan, Hagonoy, Palingon, Sta. Ana, Tipas, Tuktukan, Ususan and Wawa.

However, as soon as the town was organized, Don Juan Basi, the kapitan of Taguig, tried but failed to overthrow the Spanish government. He was exiled for two years as punishment. This tradition continued on 300 years later, when many natives of the town joined the Katipunan and became part of the revolution against Spanish colonialism started by Andres Bonifacio.

Later, they joined the revolutionary government of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo and battled the Americans led by Gen. Wheaton. On Feb. 6, 1899, Taguig patriots trounced US troops in the hills of Taguig, now part of Pateros and Ft. Bonifacio but were overwhelmed by the superior artillery and numerical superiority of the Americans.

Taguig became a separate municipality on March 29, 1900 under Gen. Order No. 40 issued by American officials. It became part of the province of Rizal in 1901, merged with Muntinlupa and Pateros in 1903. On Feb. 29, 1908, Taguig was proclaimed as a separate municipality under Rizal on January 1, 1918.

A big chunk of the town's territory, 2,578 hectares, was carved by the US and turned into a military camp named Ft. McKinley. The same reservation was taken over by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II. Returning US forces took over it in 1945. In 1949, the US yielded control over the camp to the Philippine government and renamed Ft. Bonifacio.

Before the imposition of martial law, the town was subdivided into 11 barrios, namely, Bagumbayan, Bambang, Bicutan, Calzada, Hagonoy, Napindan, Sta. Ana, Tipas, Tuktukan, Ususan and Wawa.

The Integrated Reorganization Plan (IRP) implemented during martial law increased the number of barrios, which were changed into barangays, to 18, with Upper Bicutan, Western Bicutan, Maharlika, which is dominated by Muslim residents, Signal Village, Palingon-Tipas, Bagong Tanyag, Ibayo-Tipas, and Ligid-Tipas being added to the list. Ligid-Tipas is predominantly comprised of members of the Iglesia Ni Kristo. Tipas was also the "birthplace" of the Iglesia ni Kristo.

Eventually, a substantial portion of Ft. Bonifacio was placed under the jurisdiction of Taguig.

On Nov. 7, 1975, Taguig was separated from Rizal Province and included in the National Capital Region through Presidential Decree No. 824.

The town has a total land area of 4,538.2 hectares, with 35 percent of the total land area, or 1,626.2 hectares from the Ft. Bonifacio military reservation.

The total population of the town based on the survey of 2000 was 467,375, with Western Bicutan having the biggest population at 90,336, Signal Village had 82,785 people, Lower Bicutan had 63,214, and Upper Bicutan, 48,865.

Other barangays had the following number of residents: Bagong Tanyag, 32,078; Bagumbayan, 27,058; Bambang, 5,304; Calzada, 10,119; Hagonoy, 16,837; Ibayo-Tipas, 13,576; Ligid-Tipas, 6,412; Maharlika Village, 12,857; Napindan, 9,751; Palingon, 7,159; Sta. Ana, 12,863; Tuktukan, 7,129; Ususan, 13,872, and; Wawa, 7,180.

With the administration of Mayor Freddie Tinga, the town is expected to expand some more, perhaps higher than its annual growth rate of seven percent, as more livelihood opportunities are opened through the operations of the Ft. Bonifacio Global City, the development of the Lakeshore Town, the opening of IT and entertainment zones and the full operation of industrial estates, in addition to operations of the Food Terminal, Inc. (FTI).

Tinga believes that the future of the town is rosy as infrastructure development continues apace, with mixed-use areas being opened for industrial, residential and commercial purposes.

Indeed, a town with a colorful history of patriotism may eventually have a progressive future as well.

Development plan for Taguig is people-based

One siginificant element in the development plan for Taguig is that it is based on improving the lives of people through massive infrastructure development, the upgrading of existing communities and the zoning of the territory to cover the business district, residential areas and other areas for commercial and entertainment purposes,

No less than 35 major projects have been lined up to cover infrastructures, local administration development, computerization of government operations, sprots ans recreation facilities, imrpovement of poor communities, flood control upgrading of water, sewerage and pwer systems, and the construction of more roads.

Among these projects is the construction of a new municipal hall that will be bigger and could house the expected expansion of activities in the event Taguig is elevated to a city.

All these projects have to be completed between 2001 and 2004 and the town administration under Mayor Freddie Tinga has resolvced to achieve an ambitious program that experts say can be achieved with srong political will.

As it is, Tinga and his team at the town hall have improved revenue collection, with collections rising by P49,969,336.17 from July 2001 to February 2002 compared to the collections from July 2000 to February 2001.

For this year alone, the target figure of P615,965,000 may be reached immedately. From January 2, 2002 to February 28, 2002, a total of P127,761,000 was already collected. This is more than 20 percent of the entire target. Bulk of the revenues came from business taxes, particularly from Fort Bonifacio, FTI and the Taguig-Bagumbayan Industrial Complex.

Tinga achieved this due to the operation of a composite team that was organized to make tax collection even more efficient.

A visionary, Tinga believes that with the vast expanse of territory still open, Taguig can very well implement a comprehensive plan that covers economic, social, environmental, and infrastructure development along with the creation of an administration that is efficient and result-oriented.

Under his administration, work on the lakeshore town development will be pursued to open up large areas for profitable use. Road systems will crisscross Taguig, providing quick transportation for people and better access to Rizal towns, South Expressway and other parts of the National Capital Region.

By segregating various areas and transfoming them for indusirial use, the mayor believes that more and more companies would establish their operations in Taguig.

He believes that more and more industries would relocate to Taguig if the town can create conditions for better productivity, efficient government service and supply better-trained manpower.

It is on this score that Taguig has committed itself to improve the training and education of thousands of young men and women to work on the relocating industries and businesses.

On housing, Taguig will build residential communities on the lakeshore while developing a marina and recreational facilities. The road dike project in the area would improve transportation and boost commerce as well.

Mixed use areas will be established in the expansion zone while built up areas would be upgraded as the demand for more housing increases.

Participation of Other Property Developers to Spur Growth

Full of trust and confidence in the area and its administration, D.M. Consunji Inc. launched its very first major real estate development project in Taguig, the Lakeview Manors.

To further gain a stronghold in tha area, the company will soon launch Vista de Largo, its second housing development in the municipality.

Another, property developer, Ayala Land Inc. also acquired a 10-hectare parcel of land located at the northeast side of the Global City. The company envisions to venture into another mixed-use development with a commitment to hire residents of the municipality as part of its work force.

FTI, Sta.Maria Industrial Estate as Partners for Progress

The Food Terminal, Inc.(FTI) and the Sta. Maria Industrial Estate are two major employers agro-industrial and commercial estates that operate in Taguig.

FTI was organized in 1968 to stabilize of agricultural commodities and inrease productivity. It was established on the basis of presidential Decree No 347 and was originally owned and manged by the Development Bank of Phils.(DBP).

Operations started in 1969 on a 120-hectare taken from Fort Bonifacio under a 50-year lese contract.

FTI operates as food storage and processing facility that also provides warehousing services to nearly 300 locators employing no less that 40,000 people.

> **"When DMCI first invested in Taguig, a lot of people doubted the business viability of our move and asked, Why Taguig? But, we felt otherwise for we knew then that if there is a place in Metro Manila that is ripe with opportunites, it is Taguig."**
>
> ***– ISIDRO A. CONSUNJI –***
> ***President***

On the other hand, the first private industrial estate to be organized in Taguig was the Sta. Maria Industrial Estate that is located at the Mañalac Compound in Bagumbayan. Businessman Tony Mañalac owns the property.

All the locators in the area have organized themselves into the Taguig Bagumbayan Industrial-Commercial Association, Inc.(TBICAI). Established in 1984, its charter members were 20 companies.

Today, the TBICAI has 93 corporate members, including industrial companies, recycling plants for various products, chemical manufacturers, garments firms and even banks.

TBICAI is a pioneering venture into good corporate citizenship as its members rely on themselves for garbage collection, maintenance of streetlights and roads and the security.

Both FTI and Sta. Maria Industrial Estate employ many Taguig residents and they contribute much to the revenues of the town, which has grown tremendously since Mayor Freddie Tinga took over the helm of leadership in July 2001.

FTI is set to undergo a major improvement of facilities in its bid to secure more business and fulfill its mandate to stabilize food prices and improve the processing and warehousing of agricultural commodites. First to undergo rehabilitation is the slaughterhouse whose rehabilitation is set sto start in June 2002.

More companies are likewise setting up shop in Sta. Maria Industrial Estate as Taguig sets out to attract more investors through its long-term plan to become growth center of the National Capital Region.

Cityhood Beckons Taguig

Taguig residents have been clamoring for the elevation of the town to a city, believing that such change would spur the entry of more invesiments and the full development of infrastructures.

Such clamor has been going on for quite a number of years, and it was four years ago that the Commission on Elections decided to hold a plebiscite on the matter on April 25, 1998 based on an order by the Supreme Court.

Flip-flopping decision on the part of the Comelec has prevented the full counting of the votes cast.

However, the people of Taguig consider this development as a temporary setback that would eventually be overcome as justice always prevails.

For them the fuller development of Taguig hinges on its becoming a city and securing a charter of its own so it can plan ahead and pursue its long-term development program.

Lakeshore town dev't to boost growth in Taguig

One of the more interesting projects being undertaken in Taguig is the 9.8 kilometers-long North Laguna Lakeshore Urgent Flood Control and Drainage Project, known also as Road Dike, which the Japan Bank for International Development (JBIC) is funding.

This project was carefully studied by experts from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the national government and even foreign consultants who have concluded that the project would help immensely in preventing flooding in Taguig.

It is a noteworthy project since 66 percent of the entire territory of Taguig is flood-prone, and the floods of 1972, 1978, 1986, 1995 and 2000 affected many areas. With this project, these disastrous floods would be a thing of the past.

According to Mayor Freddie Tinga, the project will certainly be a boon to Taguig since it would open up 2,000 hectares of prime land for industrial purposes and infrastructure projects, spurring more investments and job opportunities for the people of the town without affecting the livelihood of the residents from the lake.

No land would be lost due to the dike project, which has been hailed by officials and residents of other Rizal towns and even Pasig City, who will all benefit from the project.

In sum, it would open up new land for the use of corporations and enterprises that would otherwise invest their money elsewhere. The road system will certainly expand through the project, which was designed to control water flow and prevent the seepage of water into low-lying areas.

According to project consultants, the road will not affect the Taguig River or the environment but merely allow another road to be used by motorists, thus giving a quicker way to Taguig or South Expressway.

It is not a real estate project in any manner, consultants stressed, since it is a flood control project that would benefit the town as a whole.

Popular support for the project has overwhelming, with 10,470 residents of Barangays Lower Bicutan, Napindan, Tuktukan, Wawa, Bambang, Sta. Ana, Hagonoy, Ususan, Ligid-Tipas and Calzada signing a manifesto supporting the project.

However, some quarters raised issues against the project, to the dismay of the people of Taguig. The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) stopped the project in November 2001 and the President suspended it in January 2002, only to realize that the project was beneficial to the people the following month. "By the wisdom of the project, it would help the people," President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said.

Mayor Tinga says the dike project will allow the local government unit (LGU) to plan and construct many facilities along the project route, noting that Laguna Lake itself is a resource that the town could fully exploit.

Nonetheless, experts have bewailed suggestions that the project route be changed, saying such modification would jack up the project cost by P9 billion, a huge amount by any account.

Stopping the project would also hit the Philippine government where it hurts most-the pocketbook-since it would mean P500 million in damages to the JBIC. Worse, funding for other projects needing Japanese support would be jeopardized as well.

So beneficial is this project that Mayors Tinga, Soledad Eusebio of Pasig City and Rosendo Capco of Pateros agreed that the project must continue. Even Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman Benjamin Abalos believes it must be pursued.

With these developments, construction may resume in three months. The President has given the green light to the resumption of work on the project.

The project, Mayor Tinga stressed, is crucial to the pursuit of other development programs in Taguig.

It would lead to the establishment of parks and mixed-use areas in the lakeshore and allow Taguig to develop a large area for the long-term benefit of the town residents.

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bandayrel ◎ Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

STILL clueless about the coming of the El Niño, this Mangyan woman who just survived a bout with malaria wonders why the fields have dried up and cracked. MEI MAGSINO

Mangyans starve in food basket

By Mei Magsino

Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro

IN WHAT appears to be the most cruel joke in the province known as one of Luzon's food baskets, the Mangyans of Occidental Mindoro have been subsisting on poisonous mountain yams and unsafe freshwater snails since December last year.

Worse, malaria has spread among the Mangyans, according to a village leader.

This, while the town mayor recently purchased a Toyota Hi-Lux pickup worth P1.1 million.

Five kilometers from the poblacion of the capital town of Mamburao is Sitio Tugilan, a Mangyan settlement in Barangay Tayamaan where 30 Mangyan families live on *nami*, a wild, poisonous and fibrous yam they dig from the mountains.

The Mangyan settlement's "vice mayor," Amado Dalusong, said the last time they planted palay was in December last year.

"The problem is, the earth has dried up and cracked because there is no more water," Dalusong said in poor Tagalog.

Three of the four hectares of the settlement area are used for farming, and each family has its own field. Huts and banana trees are found in the remaining land.

The Mangyans plant rice only during the rainy season. Last year, their one-hectare rice field produced only 10 sacks, which were divided among the 30 families.

The people eat rice only after the harvest season. The last time they did was before the May 14, 2001 elections when candidates campaigning for local government positions handed out rice and canned sardines.

With the onset of the El Niño weather phenomenon, it would take eight months more before they could eat rice again, unless an election campaign starts again.

Dalusong, along with his family and entire neighborhood, and probably all the Mangyan settlements in the entire province, still does not know that the El Niño is coming.

But even before drought began to parch their land, they have been subsisting on *nami* since December, supposedly their month of "*tag-sagana*" (season of abundance).

Nami

The deer and wild pigs they used to hunt are now gone because there are no more forests in the mountains. Persistent *kaingin* (slash-and-burn farming) has contributed to the disappearance of the forests.

When the male Mangyans cannot find *nami*, their wives would go down to the river and pick snails that they boil and eat. But the children have remained thin and frail, and their bellies have become swollen, which could indicate affliction of schistosomiasis or snail fever.

Ed Datos, 52, a Mangyan who has lived in the settlement for more than 20 years, said he has seen bad times in their place, but this is definitely the worst.

"There is no more *nami* even in the mountains. We have to go to the other side and the far mountains to dig *nami*. Often, we can't even get half a sack," Datos said in Filipino.

Even Rodolfo Plopiño, farm manager of the nearby Jopson Aqua Livestock Integrated Resources Inc. who visits the settlement every three months, was shocked when he learned about the situation of the Mangyans.

"The last time we visited was in December when we gave out food and clothes," Plopiño said. "Back then, they still had enough food to eat."

Malaria

For a family of nine, half a sack of *nami* is enough for only one meal. After that, the family goes hungry again, waiting for the next harvest.

To squeeze out the poison and fiber from *nami*, the root crop is peeled and sliced into thin strips, and washed in the river. The sliced white flesh is dried for a day and soaked in water overnight.

The strips are pounded and placed in a clean cloth to squeeze out the poison, after which these are again dried in the sun.

The dried *nami* is ground into a white powdery substance, sprinkled with water and cooked over wood fire. Only then can the Mangyan family be able to eat the yam.

Datos said five Mangyans have already vomited blood after eating *nami* processed the wrong way.

Since the Mangyans have nothing nutritious to eat and the nearby Tugilan River has become a breeding place of mosquitoes, the entire settlement has been stricken with malaria, according to Dalusong.

The people have gone to the provincial hospital to seek medical treatment. "But nothing happened since we were given only paper prescriptions. We have no palay, that's why we have no money to buy medicine," Dalusong said.

Malaria usually attacks people with weak immune systems. In the Mangyans' case, the nutrition they get from eating only *nami* once a day has made the entire village susceptible to the disease.

The settlement is only five kilometers from the poblacion. Those living in farther settlements could have been suffering more.

Up to now, there has yet been no report of deaths.

According to Plopiño, this could never have happened had the Mangyans been given a water pump to irrigate their rice fields.

"If they had a water pump, they could have harvested rice last March," he said, "But it's not yet too late for that now. If they could have a water pump now, they could still be saved from the El Niño."

Mamburao Mayor Allan Aquino said help was on its way, and the Mangyans just have to ask for it.

"The problem with the Mangyans is that they don't come to me to ask for help, to ask for what they need," Aquino claimed, "But if they will come and ask for assistance, we can grant it."

They came, they saw, they cleaned up

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.

Dolores, Quezon

DURING this year's observance of Earth Day, which also coincides with the celebration of the International Year of Mountains, environmentalists and mountaineers all over the world again retraced the old muddy and slippery trails of their favorite mountain-destinations.

In the Philippines, there is only one place that has drawn responsible mountaineers, spiritual devotees and young beauties—the mystical Mt. Banahaw in Dolores, Quezon, about 170 km southeast of Manila.

Last week, at least 300 mountaineers, spiritual pilgrims, a couple of environmentalist artists and Ms Earth Day contestants trekked to Barangays Sta. Lucia and Kinabuhayan in Dolores at the foot of Banahaw to contribute their share in helping preserve the mountain.

The municipal government, led by Mayor Rolando San Jose, initiated the cleanup.

The Tanggol Kalikasan-Southern Tagalog, Banahaw de Dolores Outdoor Club, several mountaineering and rescue groups, environmental organizations and mountaineers coming from as far as Davao City, lent their support.

A renewal of spiritual outlook on Banahaw was undertaken by the Bayanihan Para sa Kasagraduhan ng Bundok Banahaw and Mother Earth Unlimited Philippines through several environmentalist-devotees led by movie actors and environmental activists Roy Alvarez and Chin-Chin Gutierrez.

Garbage

Still reeling from the heavy influx of religious pilgrims during the past Holy Week, most of the volunteers lamented that instead of seeing traces of responsible mountaineering and a high degree of spirituality, the "visitors" left nothing of their sacredness and ecological awareness.

What they left was every kind of trash: plastic bottles of mineral water, empty cans of soda, beer and foodstuff, shampoo sachets, plastic bags and Styrofoam boxes.

Hundreds of jute sacks carried by the volunteer cleaners up the mountain trails were brought down bulging with garbage collected from several camps and religious sites.

Emmanuel Calayag, municipal environment and natural resources officer, admitted that the local government's policy of collecting "fees" could have, in one way or another, resulted in the big volume of trash.

"Most of those who paid their way in probably thought that because we collected the entrance fees, we can now afford to hire janitorial services to clean up the mess during their stay," Calayag said.

"They failed to grasp the real intention behind the collection," he added.

This year, the local government started collecting entrance fees from visitors under Municipal Ordinance No. 88-2001. Pilgrims are required to pay P5 as conservation fee, P20 as camping fee, P50-P100 as campsite fee (for a stay of three days and two nights), and an optional fee of P50 for a certificate of conquest.

The local government was able to collect only the entrance fees as the campsites were still being prepared.

Calayag explained that the fees would be spent for the mountain preservation and protection program, especially after every pilgrimage season.

8 dump trucks

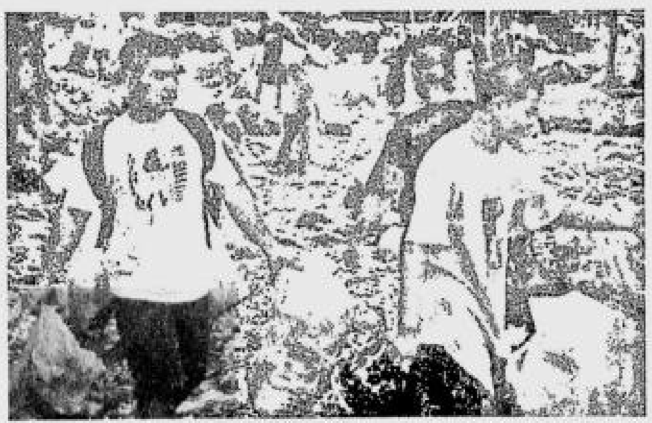
He disclosed that at least eight dump trucks of trash have been collected during several cleanup mobilizations right after the Lenten season.

"But it seems that more will be collected with the initial volume that has just been brought down by the volunteers," he said, pointing at the stack of jute sacks containing assorted trash.

In the horizon, Calayag pointed at the wide cogonal area in nearby Mt. Cristobal that had just been razed by a fire of unknown origin several days ago.

"If we did not have an established fire line between the boundary of Laguna and Quezon, part of the lush greenery of Mt. Banahaw could have been also burned down," he said.

In one spot of the uphill road, a jeep lies on its side, which according to him was loaded with mountaineer-volunteers. "It accidentally fell on the soft shoulder. Thank God, nobody was hurt."



VOLUNTEERS collect the piles of trash left by irresponsible visitors to Mt. Banahaw. DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.

About a million visitors trek the mountain every year.

Marlon Rivera, one of the volunteer cleaners belonging to the Candelaria Mountaineers, pointed at the trash as proof of the ignorance of basic mountaineering and ecological awareness.

"They never learn," he fumed.

Positive spirit

During one of the environmental workshops, Alvarez urged the participants to harness all the "positive spirit" that one can muster during the celebration.

He urged the residents to form a cooperative to improve their economic lives.

"That would be achieved through the establishment of several sustainable farms in strategic areas of Mt. Banahaw, which will be planted with herbal medicine and other (organically cultivated) plants for the medicinal and economic interests of the people in the area," Alvarez said.

Gutierrez urged the beauty pageant participants to link arms and be with the rest of the world in saving the environment. "Let the spirit of Mt. Banahaw guide you, as we are also being guided. Let us all unite for the sake of the environment."

Caller ID leads GenSan cops to bomb suspects

From page A1

who claimed to be the head of the Abu Sayyaf special operations group.

In several radio interviews, Alghazie had claimed responsibility for Sunday's bombing outside the Fitmart Shopping Center that killed 15 people, and for the burning of two shopping malls here last month. Alghazie claimed that he was using a pseudonym.

"I believe they belong to a big group. We will find out exactly whether one of them is Abu Muslim Alghazie after the tactical interrogation," Baluyot said.

Baluyot later disclosed that Macalinsal admitted during tactical interrogation that he was behind the bomb scare and that he was the one who called Bayantel on Tuesday afternoon.

In an interview with reporters, Macalinsal said he was just taking orders from an unidentified caller who had threatened to kill him if he refused to comply.

Alliance

Baluyot said the suspects were disgruntled members of the MNLF, MILF and NPA, who had formed a "Lost Command."

The MILF and the communist-led National Democratic Front do not have a formal tie-up but are known to have a tactical alliance, which allows commanders on the ground to work together against the government.

A woman at the house where the three suspects were arrested, Abina Lumbawa, said they had been staying there for two months in exchange for acting as helpers.

She said the house served as the office of the Association of Free Nationalist Moros, a group affiliated with the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), the country's main leftist organization. Bayan has frequently been accused of being a front for the communist insurgents.

The raiding team seized from the house leaflets of the Communist Party of the Philippines, four kilos of lead, copper wire, a .38 cal. pistol, four 60-mm mortar rounds, five fragmentation grenades, a green folder containing documents, and a green book with the inscription "Ispesyal nga Kursong Masa." Police also seized allegedly subversive documents placed in four big traveling bags.

The mortar round was similar to the explosive used in the deadliest of three bomb blasts to hit General Santos. There was another explosion on Sunday and another on Monday but caused no casualties.

Aron Salah was out when police raided his residence on the strength of a search warrant issued by Municipal Trial Court Judge Antonio Lubao. He was reportedly in Marawi City.

Mohammad Salah, 70, and father of Aron, told police that the seized documents belonged to the younger Salah, according to Baluyot.

Baluyot said police were still conducting follow-up operations to capture other suspects.

11 raids

The arrest of the three suspected bombers was part of 11 raids conducted in General Santos and Cotabato City, according to Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu.

He said the raids also resulted in the arrest of three suspected members of a kidnap group in Cotabato City.

Cimatu said he had ordered his division commanders to hit the bombers in their sanctuaries in Davao City, Iligan City, Zamboanga City, Pagadian, Dipolog and Ipil town.

"All these are designed to neutralize completely the bombers in the urban centers," he said.

In Malacañang, acting Press Secretary Silvestre Afable said the anti-terrorist crackdown in General Santos would be expanded to wherever the suspects in the April 21 bombing were believed hiding.

Afable said that although the situation in General Santos "has stabilized," the crackdown would proceed within and outside the city.

The bombings drew condemnation from the Catholic Church.

Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez and the 23 priests of the diocese of Marbel described the April 21 bombing in General Santos as "inane and beastly act."

They appealed for people to "pray without ceasing, to remain calm in the midst of troubles and to be vigilant at all times."

"Work together with local authorities for the protection and defense of your respective communities," they said.

Gutierrez is chair of the Episcopal Commission on Social Action, Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. ***With reports from Dennis A. Maliwanag, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Martin P. Marfil in Manila; and AFP***

Race machine . . .

From page A1

eral), will be on permanent view at the New York Hall of Science in Queens as of June.

"It's a weird feeling," said Kathy Zajchenko, a museum visitor in her 50s from Prattsburg, Pennsylvania. As soon as she sat down in the machine, she glimpsed herself as a woman in her 70s (the machine also has an aging function and also allows people to see how they might look with a facial deformity). She then tried out a spectrum of ethnic groups.

"The Middle Eastern image worked pretty well for me," she said with a grin as she stepped out of the machine for the next person in line.

A prayer for unity

"The machine is really a prayer for unity . . . It's about seeing through our differences to sameness, it's like stepping into someone else's skin," said Burson, who added the database of Middle Eastern faces, both Arab and Jewish, after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11.

When you sit inside the box, the machine creates a digital image of your face. You push some buttons, and, using a composite of various photos of people of a certain ethnic group mixed with your own facial features, the machine comes up with an image.

The resulting photo, while not always recognizable, is eerie.

"I've always wanted to allow people to see differently. I'm a documentary photographer. I'm documenting the unseen, because what we can't see is so much more fascinating that what we can see," Burson said.

Known for her computer generated photographs of composite faces, she first gained national attention for her Aging Machine.

The technology, later purchased by the FBI, makes images of what a face might look like as it ages. Used to come up with the images of missing children as they age, it proved so effective that it helped authorities find four missing children in the first year of its use.

Mankind's face

The exhibit also includes thought-provoking composite images.

Burson's 1982 "Warhead I," features a haunting and strangely familiar face. Weighted to the number of warheads in each nation's arsenal at the time, it is a composite of Ronald Reagan, Leonid Brezhnev, Margaret Thatcher, Francois Mitterand and Deng Xiaoping.

"Mankind," completed in 1985, features a distinctly Asian-looking face. It is a composite of Asian, white and black faces used in proportion to each ethnic group's population in the world. Burson is making an updated version using the database of images from the Human Race Machine.

There is also a serene-looking 1990 composite of images of Jesus, Buddha and Muhammad, an attempt to imagine the face of universal holiness.

Also featured are photos of alternative healers and what Burson says are their auras, androgynous faces, children and adults with facial anomalies, and a wall of photos of "Guys Who Look Like Jesus," including people of all ethnic groups who responded to an ad Burson placed in the Village Voice requesting Jesus look-alikes.

"There are a lot of guys around who look like Jesus, and I wondered why they look like Jesus," she said. "Some of them really carry that peaceful energy with them, and some of them just had a bad hair cut in high school." ***AP***

Pope reads riot act to US cardinals

From page A1

the Catholic Church in the United States and prompted the Pope to call for the meeting of all US cardinals.

In his address, Pope John Paul said he would no longer tolerate pedophile priests. Putting forward his own zero tolerance policy, he said in no uncertain terms that pedophilia was a crime and that pedophile priests could run but could not hide in his Church.

"The abuse, which has caused this crisis, is by every standard wrong and rightly considered a crime by society: it is also an appalling sin in the eyes of God," he said.

The Pope's powerful, clear words may determine whether the US Church formulates policy to expel pedophiles from the priesthood and hand them over to civil authorities.

The Catholic Church in the United States has been shaken by revelations that bishops transferred priests known to have molested children from parish to parish instead of defrocking them.

Participants at Tuesday's sessions said they had not discussed the possible resignation of Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston, who is at the heart of the scandal and some said it was not expected to be discussed today, the last day of the meeting.

Scandal's beginning

The trial of John Geoghan, a former Boston area cleric, started the scandal that has deeply angered US Catholics. Documents released during court proceedings showed that senior members of the Church hierarchy kept priests ministering to parishioners even though they knew the clerics had sexually abused children.

ZERO tolerance for pedophile priests is the clear message Pope John Paul II sends to American cardinals who he had called to a crisis meeting in the Vatican to discuss the child sex scandals in the United States.

The Pope, who said he was "deeply grieved" by the scandal, said pedophiles could not be allowed to hide in the priesthood.

"People need to know that there is no place in the priesthood and religious life for those who would harm the young," he told the meeting, which one of the 24 participants called "very serious, even somber."

Several cardinals said the Pope appeared to be backing a "one strike and you're out" rule for the automatic expulsion of pedophile priests.

Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles said: "(The Pope) is being as clear as he can be. There is no place for abusers in the priesthood, whatsoever. You can convert hearts and offer reconciliation but you can't reassign them (pedophile priests)."

Policy for dismissal

Churchmen in the United States will formulate a policy in June on the dismissal of priests who have abused children.

Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington, D.C., made a five-point proposal on Tuesday for a national policy on pedophilia in his address to the meeting.

They were: reaching out to victims; removing a pedophile priest from office while an investigation goes on; informing civil authorities; sending the priest to a therapeutic center for evaluation; diocesan review boards made up of lay people as well as the clergy.

The American cardinals and Vatican officials will discuss proposals made on the first day of talks, hold open discussions and have a working lunch with the Pope.

The meeting will end on Wednesday night with a final statement.

Welcome but . . .

US Catholics welcomed the Pope's words but some said they were late and that it would take more than strong words to calm the crisis and heal the victims.

"My first reaction is it's better than nothing," said Luise Cahill Dittrich, a representative of Voice of the Faithful, an organization set up in the aftermath of the scandal to boost parishioners' involvement in Church affairs.

But she said the statement was "emotionally flat" and looked to her like it had been written "by committee." ***Reuters***

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Noynoy: Sin, Cory warned of takeover

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self was present during Sin's meeting with Freedom Force advocates including former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., Philippine Star columnist Teodoro Benigno and Pastor "Boy" Saycon.

Bishop Villegas was unavailable for comment.

In Malacañang, the President said she had told Freedom Force to stop its activities, which she described as "another one of those foolish things" further destabilizing her administration.

She said she relayed this message through Chief Supt. Florencio Fianza, who was present when Freedom Force advocates met with Sin and allegedly tried to enlist his support for "collective leadership" in the government, a concept generally interpreted as a junta.

"I talked with Flor Fianza—after all, I'm his commander in chief—and I said that they should stop," the President said in an interview Tuesday over GMA 7's late-night news program "Frontpage."

"*Sila ang lalong nagde*-destabilize. *Kunya-kunyari nagkukuwento na may nagde*-destabilize *sa akin* (It's they who are causing further destabilization. They make it appear that there are other parties doing so)," she said.

"*Sila ang pinaka*-prominent *na nag-uusap doon. Sino pa* (They're the most prominent persons talking about it. Who else)?" she added.

The President also said that in case Cojuangco and Saycon got in touch with her, she would again tell them to desist from whatever they were planning

Cojuangco, a brother of Ms Aquino, and Saycon are members of the Council for Philippine Affairs (Copa), a group that played a key role in the ouster of President Joseph Estrada.

Ms Macapagal pointed out that the personalities identified with Freedom Force "had always been against" her and did not want her to assume the presidency.

"What they wanted was collective leadership. They didn't want me. They have never been allied with me," she said.

No part

But Congressman Aquino said the impression conveyed to his mother was that Freedom Force was merely reporting a planned takeover of which it was not a part.

He said there was a suggestion from the group that maybe it was necessary for the government to "get in touch" with the supposed plotters.

The congressman refused to comment on how Ms Aquino felt about Cojuangco's involvement in Freedom Force.

He said his mother had the same position as the cardinal's: "Of course she will not support this (takeover). We experienced a military takeover (during martial law) and we do not want to experience it again."

He also said his mother was supportive of Ms Macapagal. "She thinks GMA is doing a good job (and is) sometimes (working) too hard," he noted, adding that the President shouldn't spread herself too thin.

Benigno, Cojuangco and Saycon have strongly denied that they were plotting to unseat the President and install a junta.

But Cojuangco has noted that the people were "not satisfied with existing conditions" and that the situation was ripe for a move against the administration.

Ignore

Freedom Force is supposed to come up with a manifesto in June. But meanwhile, it continued to draw brickbats from other congressmen.

Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. said the best thing to do about the reported planned junta was to ignore it.

"You should learn to overlook these things," he said.

Bulacan Rep. Willie B. Villarama said Benigno and Saycon were afflicted with a "messianic complex" and were convinced that they were king makers.

"They should run for barangay positions first," he said. "Talking about destabilization without details will only drive away investors."

Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles said the plans of Freedom Force were unbelievable.

"(It) is incapable of overthrowing the administration. It will not succeed," he added.

With a shrug

The President herself appeared unimpressed. Asked how she was responding to reports on Freedom Force, she said: "Take it with a shrug. Another one of those foolish things."

She also rejected its call for collective leadership, saying "all (its) premises are wrong."

Benigno, who conceptualized Freedom Force, has raised the need for a "third force" to serve as buffer for the government in the face of supposed threats from the Right and Left.

But the President said: "No, we have a unitary form of government and that is what our Constitution calls for."

She also scoffed at Benigno's warning that the country could be in danger of a communist-led revolution or a coup by the military.

"That's nothing. That's remote. It's just them imagining it," she said.

To the question of whether the President was convinced of the Copa's sincerity when it declared yesterday its full support of the administration, acting Press Secretary Silvestre Afable said he had "no basis to make a statement."

During his regular briefing, Afable told reporters that the Copa had issued a statement that "they support wholeheartedly the administration."

"I think that's that," he said.

But the President does not plan to meet with the members of Copa, Afable said, adding: "We don't see any necessity to add any fuel to this controversy."

Very emotive

Afable surmised that Ms Macapagal was "surprised" and "bothered a bit" by reports on the existence of Freedom Force.

"The President is usually a very emotive person," he said. "I guess when she received the reports, she was surprised, but this does not mean she was deeply bothered."

He went on to say that she was "bothered a bit but not deeply disconcerted," and added: "This does not mean she's losing sleep over the matter."

But Afable drew attention to the President's remark that the Copa "has not been her political ally since the beginning."

He said it was up to law enforcement agencies to determine whether Copa leaders had violated any law.

Afable said reports of disgruntlement and withdrawal of support by groups that earlier supported Ms Macapagal were part of the democratic process.

He said there were also "former enemies" who were now pledging support to the President.

"Popular support for the Macapagal administration is strong," he said.

Copa wants Congress to probe Limcaoco and Inquirer reporter

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE COUNCIL for Philippine Affairs (Copa) yesterday said Congress should investigate Conrado "Dodi" Limcaoco and INQUIRER reporter Christine Herrera for allegations that the group was plotting to overthrow the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Before they (congressmen) investigate us, they should investigate Limcaoco and Herrera first," said Copa secretary general Pastor "Boy" Saycon. "They started everything. They are misleading the public and the President."

Saycon said Limcaoco, in particular, should be made to explain where he got the report that the Copa was organizing a multisectoral coalition called Freedom Force, which was supposedly intended to take over the administration.

Limcaoco, the President's adviser on ecclesiastical and media affairs, should also explain the design of the junta that Freedom Force was supposedly advocating and name the 19 generals allegedly supporting the plan, Saycon said.

It was Limcaoco who tipped Herrera that Saycon and other key personalities had met with Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin to seek the latter's support for the "collective leadership" that Freedom Force was espousing. "He was not even at the meeting, so how come he came out with all these malicious reports?" Saycon said.

Limcaoco admitted that he was not at the meeting. But he said he was informed as to those who were present and what had transpired.

Herrera's report was published in the Tuesday issue of the INQUIRER.

Saycon said there seemed to be a "collusion" between Limcaoco and Herrera to attribute the report on the supposed junta to Bishop Socrates Villegas.

Asked to comment on the President's statement on television Tuesday night that the Copa had always been against her, Saycon said: "I don't want to reopen old wounds of the past. Let's just move forward."

Last August, the President appointed Saycon to the board of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. as private sector representative.

He is also reported to be a member of the Edsa Commission.

The Copa yesterday issued a statement expressing its support for the administration and saying it was "doing (its) best to help" the President.

It also presented stickers bearing the message "Let us all build a strong nation" set on an upright Philippine flag.

No proof of conspiracy, says Drilon

From page A1

plotters.

"I think it's premature to come to that conclusion of clearing anyone from any possible charge of conspiracy to commit rebellion," Pimentel said.

He said there was a need to investigate at least 19 generals, leaders of the middle class and business groups who had allegedly thrown their support behind the supposed move to unseat President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Pimentel specifically mentioned Chief Supt. Florencio Fianza, who was among those present at the meeting last week between Sin and Freedom Force advocates.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Fianza could not separate his being a police officer from his personal identity.

"If you are a police officer, you're always a public officer. You cannot say that you attended that meeting in your private capacity," Lacson said.

Not just rumor

Lacson said the alleged plot was not just a rumor because he had been hearing about it for months.

"The horns are hiding but the tails are showing," he said, and pointed out that any attempt to form a junta or mount a coup would never succeed without the support of the military.

Sen. Gregorio Honasan agreed that the military had always been the deciding factor in any attempt to grab power because it had the necessary firepower.

Sen. Edgardo Angara, on the other hand, blamed the President's supposed "habit of dividing Filipinos" based on loyalty to her administration for the current fractiousness in the country.

"She should not classify Filipinos into who is for her and who is not," he said. "She is the leader of the nation and her constituency includes even the people who belong to the political opposition."

Angara said the administration had a habit of calling dissenters and critics "destabilizers" or "leftists."

He said even those offering constructive criticism and alternative public policy had been routinely accused of destabilizing the government.

"A true leader of the nation listens to other voices, even the harsh and the critical ones," Angara said. "She should factor in criticisms and negative observations in crafting her policies and running the government."

'KSP'

Sen. John Osmeña said that Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, a member of Freedom Force, was "*kulang sa pansin* (lacking in attention)," and that the President should not pay attention to him.

"If he had not lacked attention, he would not be causing all this trouble. I don't think we should take him seriously," Osmeña said.

He belittled members of the Council For Philippine Affairs (Copa) as "crackpots."

Osmeña likewise took a swipe at Sin for supposedly meddling again in politics.

"I am very sad to hear that Cardinal Sin does not know any better. What is it (in Sin's powers) that he can give his blessings to a coup?" Osmeña said.

Even Sen. Robert Jaworski, whose son is married to Cojuangco's daughter, rapped the Copa, saying this was "the time when we have to just close our mouths if we cannot say anything positive."

"It will be better for those geniuses out there to just campaign and then make this country run well by their vision," he said.

Jaworski urged the Copa to stop "adding to the woes of the country."

"We haven't fixed the latest trouble we've gone through, and here we are again. What do we really want to do? We're too divisive in our visions and in our thoughts," he said.

But Sen. Rodolfo Biazon warned that the Copa's pressure to influence the President "weakens (her) capacity to govern and should send shivers along the spine of people who believe in the rule of law."

"The very prominent role played by the group in the ouster of President Joseph Estrada and the installation of (Ms Macapagal as president) makes the (Copa) a potent force that could either stabilize or destabilize the government," said the vice chair of the Senate committee on national defense and security.

Biazon advised Freedom Force to "first acquire an official position as presidential advisers or participate as officials of the government."

"If their motive to help the country is sincere, then they should help stabilize the country's political situation and not destabilize it," he said.

No solid facts

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said at a press conference that the administration would not go after the Copa or Freedom Force.

He said the Palace, particularly the Department of Justice, "can't take action at this point" because "we don't have solid facts yet."

Perez admitted that the personalities involved were "not ordinary people."

"Some of them were with me during (People Power II)," he said.

Perez, however, admitted that he had ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to look into the matter.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said the bureau was conducting an "informal" investigation of Copa secretary general Pastor "Boy" Saycon.

"We are now (looking into) Saycon's (recent) schedule, routes and itinerary. This is in aid of our (inquiry) to find out if laws were violated," Wycoco said.

He said the NBI would first look into Saycon's background before turning its attention to other personalities.

"We want to know if there is (a credible) threat to national security," he said.

Could be a problem

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes dismissed Freedom Force as a mere concept without any force, but said it could become a problem if discussed by military and police officials.

He also challenged Philippine Star columnist Teodoro Benigno and other members of Freedom Force to name the generals supposedly supportive of it.

But Reyes said that although it was merely a concept, Freedom Force could become a "self-fulfilling prophecy" that would spell doom for the administration.

"If (military and police officers) are engaged in talks like this, then they should be investigated," he said, adding:

"I would very much like Mr. Benigno and all those people who are in this to please give us the names of the generals so that we can act on the information."

Army chief Lt. Gen. Dionisio Santiago echoed Reyes' statement, saying: "Why don't they name the 19 generals? It's possible that (the officers') names are merely being used.

Director General Leandro Mendoza, chief of the Philippine National Police, also said Freedom Force did not constitute a threat.

But he said he was willing to hold a dialogue with its advocates to clarify some issues. "We can talk to them openly," he said.

Mendoza also said he had asked Fianza to explain his presence at the meeting and found his explanation satisfactory. ***With reports from Martin P. Marfil, Philip C. Tubeza, Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio***

High court okays. . .

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Associate Justice Santiago Kapunan and concurred in by Associate Justices Reynato Puno and Consuelo Ynarez-Santiago. Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. inhibited himself from the deliberations "due to close relations to a party."

Demolished argument

In the decision, the SC demolished Laurel's argument that the NCC, which he had chaired, was not a public office. He maintained that because he was no longer a public official as defined under the anti-graft law, the Ombudsman had no authority to investigate and subsequently indict him.

In addition, Laurel said his position was not classified as Grade 27 or higher, thus the Sandiganbayan and, consequently, the Ombudsman, could not have jurisdiction over him.

But the SC held that the NCC had performed executive functions.

"'The executive power' is generally defined as the power to enforce and administer the laws. It is the power of carrying the laws into practical operation and enforcing their due observance,'" the court said.

It noted that the President, upon whom the executive power is vested, created the NCC by executive order. "Clearly, the NCC performs sovereign functions. It is, therefore, a public office, and petitioner, as its chair, is a public officer."

On Nov. 14, 2000, Desierto announced the filing of graft charges against Laurel before the Sandiganbayan for allegedly increasing the Freedom Ring budget more than fivefold. Laurel also allegedly gave unwarranted advantage to a private party when he awarded the Freedom Ring project to Asia Construction Development Authority (AK) "without the benefit of a competitive public bidding."

Laurel filed a petition for certiorari with the SC to block the Ombudsman's investigation. On Sept. 24 last year, the SC issued a temporary restraining order to prevent Desierto and government prosecutors from initiating criminal charges against him, the highest-ranking government official to be indicted in connection with the so-called Expo scam.

After Laurel filed his petition, Desierto deferred the actual filing of the complaint in deference to the Supreme Court.

Legal issues

The high court declined to discuss other legal issues, such as those related to the Philippine Centennial Exposition '98 Corp. (Expocorp).

The SC said that "having arrived at the conclusion that the NCC performs executive functions and is therefore, a public office, we need no longer delve at length (into) the issue of whether Expocorp is a private or public corporation."

"Even assuming that Expocorp is a private corporation, petitioner's position as chief executive officer of Expocorp arose from his chairmanship of the NCC. Consequently, his acts or omissions as CEO of Expocorp must be viewed in the light of his powers and functions as NCC chair."

SALVADOR "DOY" LAUREL: Why me?

The decision also stated that it was not wise for the high court to determine whether Laurel received compensation or not as NCC chair.

"Granting that petitioner did not receive any salary, the records do not reveal if he received any allowance . . . Notably, under the bylaws of Expocorp, the CEO is entitled to per diems and compensation. Would such fact bear any significance?" the ruling read.

Irregular changes

According to Desierto, Laurel, in a series of decisions from Nov. 5 to Dec. 6, 1996, also made irregular changes in the original plan and increased the budget of the Freedom Ring, from P248 million to P1.2 billion.

"Records showed that the change involved the expansion of the original scope of the fabric roof from an area of 2.8 hectares to cover the entire Freedom Ring," Desierto added.

Ramos originally designed the Centennial Exposition as a "strategic undertaking" to attract foreign investments in Central Luzon following the 1991 eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. To pursue the projects, Ramos organized Expocorp on April 16, 1996, initially as a government-owned joint venture corporation to oversee and implement the projects.

In July 1996, it was given an initial budget of P1.9 billion. The project included a P248-million budget for the Freedom Ring that would house a 35,000-seat amphitheater, P1.3 billion for site and services and a Phase II theme park; P179-million allocation for preconstruction costs and P157 million for contingencies. On top of the P1.9 billion, the government added a P354-million budget for "Exhibitry." In sum, the Expo budget totaled P2.251 billion.

The ad-hoc Independent Citizens' Committee headed by former Sen. Rene Saguisag and created by then-President Joseph Estrada found that the Expo project had actually cost P3.5 billion. But total expenses for the Centennial celebrations allegedly amounted to more than P9 billion.

On Nov. 6, 1999, Saguisag recommended the indictment of Ramos, Laurel and six others for grossly overspending on the Philippine Centennial projects, of which the Expo was a part.

Saguisag said that at the very least, Ramos—because by then he was no longer president—should pay a fine equal to six months' salary.

Barredo new PSC commish

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PRESIDENT Arroyo has appointed blind sports official Mike Barredo to the Philippine Sports Commission, replacing resigned commissioner Richie Garcia and representing the differently-abled athletes.

Barredo thus completed the line-up of PSC officials who have been appointed and re-appointed by Ms Arroyo since last year, ending the guessing game inside the sports agency.

He was a former football player for De La Salle before he lost sight due to a vehicular accident. This handicap didn't stop him from pursuing sports and founding the Philippine Sports Association for the Differently-abled or Philspada.

Even before his appointment, Barredo vowed to champion the cause of the differently-abled athletes, who, according to him, need the PSC's support as much as the regular athletes do.

In fact, he has already met with Garcia, who briefed him on his functions as a commissioner.

Barredo is expected to bring along his top aides to help him study PSC documents in the course of making sports policies.

PSC chair Eric Buhain welcomed Barredo's appointment, saying that with Barredo's arrival, all sectors of sports is represented in the sports agency.

Buhain was named three months ago to represent the athletes, being a former athlete himself. Cynthia Carrion represents women in sports, while Butch Ramirez and Leonardo Montemayor both came from Mindanao.

Patafa polls slated May 4

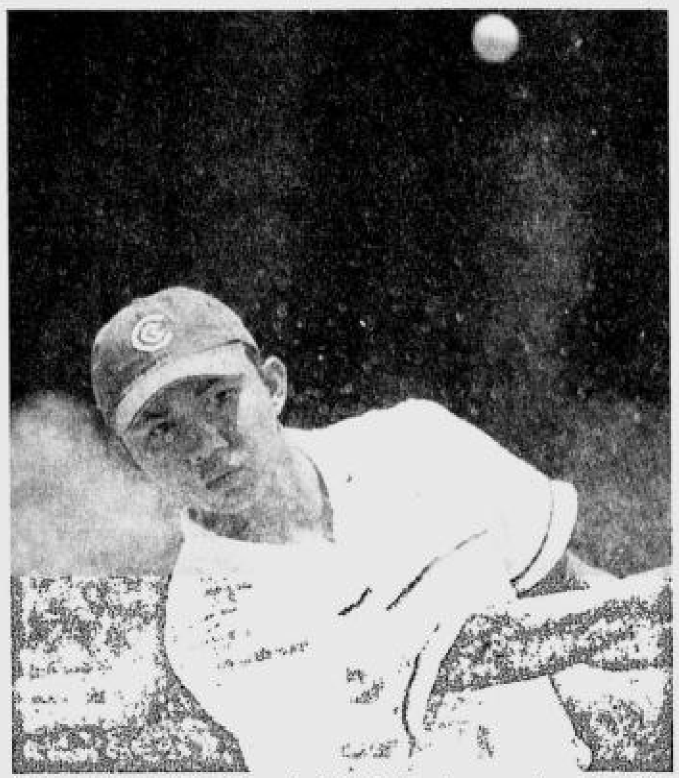
THE PHILIPPINE Amateur Track and Field Association will hold its quadrennial regional convention and election of regional directors coinciding with the Gov. Jose Sering Memorial Cup on May 1-4 at the Rizal track oval.

The Patafa directors are set to convene May 4, the final day of competitions in the Milo National Open Invitational Championships.

Patafa president Go Teng Kok said: "If we want to be at par with world-class athletes, then we should first raise the standard of leadership of our regional offices to international level."

He said the regional offices play a big part to the success of Philippine athletics, particularly in tapping raw, untested talents from the provinces like 2001 Southeast Asian Games gold medalists Eduardo Buenavista and John Lozada.

The Patafa produced nine golds in last year's SEAG to become the best performing national sports association. But Go said: "We still have a lot of work to do and our Manila office could only do so much. We need the cooperation of all concerned." *Marc Anthony Reyes*



DIZON blasts out of a trap on hole 18 during the second round of the Manila Amateur Golf yesterday. ROMY HOMILLADA

Delariarte keeps Manila Am lead

By Jong Arcano

THE BATTLE for the Manila Amateur crown seems to have come down to just three names. But the least known among them is setting the pace.

Surviving a test of character, Jerome Delariarte emerged from a wild shootout with Marlon Dizon and Angelo Que still holding on to the top spot after a second straight sub-par effort of two-under 70 yesterday at Wack Wack west.

The eagles and clusters of birdies thrown at him by his foremost rivals were not enough to cause Delariarte to fall from the driver's seat as the 23-year-old kept them at bay with his consistency.

With a six-under-par 138 aggregate for 36 holes, Delariarte led by two strokes over national stroke play titlist Marlon Dizon who holed his approach from 150 yards on the first hole on the way to a 68 and a 140 total. Reigning Philippine match play champion Angelo Que also carded a 68 to be three shots back at 141.

The rest of the field has a lot of catching up to do in the final half of the event organized by popular golf chain Pacsports with the full support of Wack Wack as the player in fourth position, Boyet Zaragosa, was 10 shots adrift.

The player earlier tagged as a strong title contender, Juvic Pagunsan, slid 11 shots off at 149 with three others. Pagunsan, the Southeast Asian Games gold medal winner, just couldn't get the rust off his game after an extended vacation in Bacolod as he tallied a 74 to go with his opening-round 75.

Also in that group were Cookie LaO who recovered from a 78 with a 71, Jingy Tuason who matched par 72 and Dave Hernandez (77).

The summer heat took its toll on Tommy Manotoc. He withdrew due to exhaustion after 12 holes.

"I think we're really not just against the tough field and the course but the weather as well. It's a mental and physical test for all of us," said Que who had six birdies and an eagle in his scorecard.

Meanwhile, the field grows five times in size today as competitions in Classes A, B and C and the two senior divisions get going.

Magic stun Hornets, level NBA series at 1-1

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—Tracy McGrady scored 31 points—only four after the third quarter—to lead Orlando to a 111-103 overtime victory Tuesday over Charlotte in Game 2, evening their best-of-five opening-round series.

Game 3 is Saturday in Orlando.

McGrady, plagued by a lower back strain, scored only four points in the fourth quarter, all on free throws, and missed a chance to win the game in regulation when his jumper didn't even graze the rim at the buzzer.

Pat Garrity hit a 3-pointer to give the Magic a 102-99 lead, and after four Charlotte misses, Troy Hudson scored on a jumper and made five free throws to help Orlando snap its 11-game losing streak in road playoff games.

McGrady finished 11-of-23 from the field and had 11 rebounds and seven assists. Hudson finished with 26 points and Garrity had 18.

Elden Campbell led the Hornets with 27 points, while David Wesley added 24.

Jazz 93, Kings 86

In Sacramento, California, Donyell Marshall had 19 points and eight rebounds, and Karl Malone had 18 points and 12 rebounds as Utah shocked top-seeded Sacramento, leveling their playoff series at one game apiece.

Andrei Kirilenko scored 15 points and blocked five shots as the Jazz ran out to a big lead during a horrible first-half performance by Sacramento. AP

SOLAR Entertainment will telecast Game 2 of the Dallas Mavericks-Minnesota Timberwolves best-of-five NBA Playoffs series tonight at 10 on NBN-4.

Burlington backs RP Youth cagers

IN LINE with its corporate goal of supporting youth and sports development, Burlington Industries Phils.(BIP) Inc. has agreed to sponsor the RP Youth Team formed recently by the Basketball Association of the Philippines headed by Quinteliano "Tiny" Literal. The BIP Inc. management, headed by Ruddy Tan, gave its assurance of total support for the team coached by Johnny Tam.

Now officially known as RP Youth-Burlington Socks, the national hoopsters are participating in the on-going Basketball League as guest team. This is part of their preparation for the Southeast Asian Basketball Association Youth Championship in Thailand in June.

In the past, the top hosiery firm which makes Puma, Bally and Burlington also backstopped several national teams by providing the athletes' socks and other needs.

Taekwondo tourney Sunday

NEWCOMERS take the spotlight on Sunday when the Philippine Taekwondo Association stages the 2002 Petron New Face of the Year championships at the Ninoy Aquino stadium.

According to PTA president Robert N. Aventajado, competition will be conducted in six divisions, namely, senior men and women, junior men and women and gradeschool boys and girls.

"The tourney gives newcomers a chance to gain experience and exposure," said PTA vice president Sung Chong Hong.

Through the years, Aventajado and Hong have combined their efforts to produce talented taekwondo-jins who have been winning honors for the country in international events.

Taekwondo is, in fact, a rich source of medals for the Philippines in the Southeast Asian Games with world-class bet Roberto Cruz bagging a gold medal in every SEAG since the Manila Games in 1991.

Anton returns with a bang

AFTER a three-year sabbatical, fastfood chain operator Mike Anton returned to racing with a bang by powering a Honda Civic hatchback to podium finishes in the opening rounds of the 2002 SVI Petron Blaze Super Saloon Championship series held recently at the Subic International Raceway (SIR) in the SBMA Freeport.

The 1998 SVI Production Class champion came up first and second in the Division 2 races.

Anton showed no signs of rustiness from his long layoff from competitions as he kept pace with the division favorites in the early laps of round one. He put to good use a Honda EK4 engine especially prepared by racecar mechanic Dominic Cuesta of QC Autosports.

The elder of the hard-driving Anton siblings upheld the family's prolific racing bloodline by finishing first in his comeback race. He punctuated his caper with a perfectly executed passing move on Italian expatriate Ricardo Loi in the penultimate lap to snare the top spot on the podium.

SPORTSWATCH

JVC badminton June 3

THE COUNTRY'S finest shuttlecock artists will compete in the 2002 JVC Open Badminton Championship slated June 3-9 at the Glorietta. Toshinori Yokokawa, president and CEO of JVC Philippines Inc., announced the staging of the event in a press conference yesterday at the Manila Polo Club. "We are honored to host for the second straight year this important event," said Yokokawa. He renewed JVC's commitment to the development of badminton as a fun and competitive sport for all ages and expressed optimism the P182,000-tournament will exceed last year's entries of more than 300 players. The event will be staged by IMG. Present during the launching were Gen. Edgar Aglipay, executive vice president of the Philippine Badminton Association, POC President Cito Dayrit and PSC Commissioner Cynthia Carreon.

LGBA derby continues

THE LUZON Gamecock Breeders Association LGBA) 2nd Cockfighting Conference 6-Cock Derby enters its second day today at the Mandaluyong Coliseum, with 25 qualifiers seeing action in the 4-cock championship round. The leaders, with two victories each, are hotelier-sportsman Biboy Enriquez (Firebird), former Congressman Amado Bagatsing (Air Gladiator), Manny Santos and Blandy Tolentino (MS San Pablo Heat), lawyer Ram Lopez and Tony Litonjua (Altuz Starwars), Bobby del Rosario (Mangzee Gamefarm A), engineer Jun Sevilla (JRS Spectrum), Cong. Lawrence Wacnang (Crowsland), lawyers Virgilio Manguera, Mario Antonio and Justice Magdangal Elma (M2 Chito), Tony Galang (Argga Gold Cup 2) and Alex Tang (Guts and Glory).

Macalino gains q'finals

ATENEO's Daniel Macalino outplayed Gerardo Narvaez, 6-4, 6-3, yesterday to advance in the boys' 14 under quarterfinals of the Luis Hilado Memorial Cup age group tennis tournament at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Macalino, 16-under runner-up in the Milo Tennis Cup in Baguio last month, will meet top seed Raymond Villarete of La Salle Greenhills, who breezed past Ivan Joshua Manalo, 6-1, 6-0. Second seed Christian Canlas, also of Ateneo, outclassed Rodel Navarro, 6-1, 6-2, to advance against Korean Chung Soo Han, who scored a 6-1, 6-0 win over Patrick Arevalo.

Sampras, Haas advance

HOUSTON—Pete Sampras of the United States fought off a spirited upset bid by 79th-ranked Jan Vacek of the Czech Republic Tuesday to win 4-6, 6-1, 7-5 in the first round of the US Men's Clay Court Championships. Top-seeded German Tommy Haas advanced by defeating wild card American Alex Kim 6-2, 6-4, but No. 8 Jan-Michael Gambill of the United States, despite recording 14 aces, was upset by Denmark's Kristian Pless 2-6, 6-2, 7-5. Meanwhile, defending champion Andy Roddick of the United States ousted countryman Michael Russell 6-1, 6-2. AP

Superio crew evades Davao traffic

BAYUGAN, Agusan del Sur—The touring Nissan Exalta GS Superio crew opted to skip a trip to Davao owing to a truck which got stuck in a major highway leading to the city, causing heavy traffic.

As the fourth Pan Philippine Marathon enters the final phase of its 30-day-nonstop run aimed at pushing the sedan to the limit, Denny Riel, Beboy Roque, Apey Garcia and Robby David just went back to their homebase in Leyte.

The Philippine National Police advised the Exalta crew to just turn back, according to Roque, who bared the sparkling silver-colored sedan with a fuel efficient but macho 1.6 liter 116-horsepower engine has already racked up 19,257 kilometers on its Caltex havoline odometer. The goal is to surpass the 30,586-km logged by its predecessor last year.

THE NISSAN Exalta GS Superio drives with an escort through the mountainous and rough roads of Gandara, Samar as its crew of Juvy Catajoy, Lester Susi, Ike Borja and Boy Fuentes rush to make the ferry crossing to Allen, Samar.

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SPORTS ON TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

GOLF: LPGA - The Office Depot, Final Round at 7:30 a.m. (r) on ESPN

PGA Worldcom Classic, Final Round at 2 p.m. (r), Highlights at 11 p.m. on Star Sports

TENNIS: Masters Series (Monte-Carlo) Highlights at 6 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

LBC nips Pampanga; MBA slates 4 games

By Roy Luarca

SANDERS

EDDIE Laure and TonyBoy Espinosa played key roles in LBC Batangas' MBA national championship last year.

They were at it again Tuesday night, powering the Blades past the Pampanga Stars, 78-77, as they wheeled back into contention in the MBA First Conference at the CEU Centrodome in Malolos City.

Espinosa, the 2001 finals best performer, nailed a triple and Laure, the 2001 MVP, scored on a drive in the last 44 seconds as the Blades' completed their recovery from as many as 11 points down in the third quarter.

After Laure handed the Blades the lead with 26.6 seconds left, the Stars missed three attempts before Jeffrey Sanders collared the defensive rebound and sealed LBC Batangas' second straight win after dropping its first two games.

Sanders wound up with 24 points, while Laure snagged 13 rebounds.

The Stars dropped to 1-5 and shared the cellar with the Casino Cagayan de Oro Amigos.

Meanwhile, the MBA blazes the trail in local professional basketball by holding four games in two venues on Saturday.

CHAIRMAN'S CUP

Ateneo beats La Salle, 63-57

GAMES TOMORROW
(Makati Coliseum)
1:45 p.m.—Ana Freezers vs RP Youth
4:00 p.m.—Blu Sun Power vs Shark
6:00 p.m.—Kutitap vs Montaña Jewels

By Dennis U. Eroa

RICH Alvarez and playmaker Celino Cruz gunned down monster triples as Ateneo-Hapee-Negros Navigation downed ICTSI-La Salle, 63-57, forcing a two-way tie for the lead in the PBL Chairman's Cup last night at the Makati Coliseum.

Known for his explosive inside game, the 6-foot-4 Alvarez buried a three-pointer, his first this conference, giving the Blue Eagles a five-point cushion, 60-55, with 1:44 remaining.

Unfazed, Willy Wilson retaliated with a jumper, 57-60, but the hardworking Cruz, left open in the right flank, sank another triple which zapped the strength out of the Archers, 55 seconds left.

Ateneo, which trailed most of the way before rallying in the fourth quarter, improved its record to 4-1, same slate of Kutitap. Ateneo coach Joel Banal, thus, joined his younger brother and Kutitap coach Koy on top of the standings.

Despite failing to get good numbers from backcourt wizard Mike Cortez, ICTSI-La Salle controlled the tempo of the game. Mark Magsumbol, Dominic Uy, James Yap and Bernzon Franco joined hands in giving the Archers the upper hand, 49-44, after three quarters.

With Enrico Villanueva and Alvarez doing heavy damage underneath and Magnum Membrere shooting from the outside, the Blue Eagles clawed back in style, 54-54.

Earlier, Shark Energy Drink snapped a four-game losing streak by beating Ana Freezers, 86-65.

Alaska targets semis versus FedEx today

GAME TODAY *(Philsports)*
6 p.m.—Alaska vs FedEx

By June Navarro

FEDERAL Express has the psychological edge when it confronts Alaska in the quarterfinals of the PBA Samsung Governors Cup today at the Philsports Arena.

Besides having two of the best imports in the league, the Express demolished the Aces, 83-69, during their lone elimination round meeting more than a month ago.

The Bert Lina-owned Express, who finished the regular wars at fifth place, however, have to beat the fourth-seeded Alaska Aces twice to barge into the semifinals.

Judging from the way the Aces played at the end of eliminations against San Miguel Beer last Sunday, the Express are bound to encounter difficult times in the 6 p.m. thriller.

Although both squads finished with the same slate (6-5), the Aces capped their elimination tour-of-duty with an overwhelming 74-58 beating of the Beermen. It gave them the fourth and last twice-to-beat slot going to the round-of-eight.

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METRO

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

Biggest Ecstasy haul

By Philip C. Tubeza and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation yesterday announced it has bagged the biggest single haul of Ecstasy tablets with the arrest of a Chinese national during a buy-bust at the SM Manila.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said his men confiscated 600 tablets of the high-end drug worth P720,000 from Ying Li Jia, 24, of 558 Tomas Mapua St. Binondo, Manila on Friday.

The culprit is an alleged member of a big time drug syndicate "exporting" the Ecstasy drugs to the country.

The drug haul included different kinds of Ecstasy drugs like "G2000, 747, yellow tower, peach mango or yellow mango, and green marijuana."

Each tablet reportedly costs P1,200 in the local drug market, Wycoco said.

"This is so far the biggest haul of Ecstasy drugs in our records," he added.

Wycoco said Ying was arrested after a buy-bust operation in SM Manila on April 19. He was already under NBI surveillance since the first week of April after the NBI received information about his drug-trafficking activities.

An undercover agent, who posed as a buyer, approached Jia and offered to buy 100 Ecstacy tablets from him.

The Chinese allegedly agreed to sell 600 tablets and scheduled the pay-off in SM Manila at around noon on Friday.

While closing the deal Jia became suspicious of the buyer and fled before law enforcement agents could arrest him.

NBI agents however caught up with Jia at his residence in Binondo, Manila. The lawmen also found the 600 Ecstacy tablets in his apartment.

Wycoco said Jia'admitted during interrogation that he has "a direct supplier from China," and that the money earned from his drug deals were sent back to China through banks.

But the Chinese national refused to identify his drug syndicate for fear the gang might kill his family and relatives who are in Xiamen, China.

The suspect, who does not speak Filipino, also refused to reveal how Ecstasy drugs are smuggled into the country.

Wycoco said his men are still conducting follow-up operations to identify and apprehend Jia's accomplices.

NBI summons guard in 'witness' sex cases

By Philip C. Tubeza

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco yesterday said the bureau will begin its investigation of allegations of wrong doing at the govern-

NBI SUMMONS/ A24

Who is this pretty woman?

By Alcuin Papa

A STILL unidentified woman was shot dead inside a taxi that was discovered in Makati City on Tuesday.

Makati City investigator SPO4 Soc Fernandez described the victim as around 35 to 37 years old, slim, around 5-foot-3 in height, pretty, and clad in a pair of tight brown jeans and orange blouse.

Initial police reports showed that around 1:40 p.m. Tuesday, the victim and two unidentified men boarded the R&E cab (PWM-532) of driver Romeo Canlas at the Robinsons Galleria in Mandaluyong City.

Canlas told police that the three started arguing as he drove them to their destination. One of the men reportedly told the woman in Filipino, "We are taking you in because you have a case with the Pasig RTC."

But the woman resisted, saying she had no case pending before any court, the driver said.

As Canlas was driving on C-5 highway before reaching the bridge in Pasig City, one of the men suddenly shot the woman in the head and chest.

After the shooting, the gunman ordered a shocked Canlas to proceed to C-5 and turn right on Kalayaan Avenue. The gunman then told Canlas, "So, you are Visayan, too. Do you want to join us?"

The driver said no.

When the taxi reached J.P. Rizal Extension near the Bliss housing, the gunman ordered Canlas to get down from the vehicle.

The taxi was found abandoned a few hours later on J.P. Rizal near the corner of Camia Street, Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City. The dead woman was still inside, police said.

Canlas has been invited to the National Bureau of Investigation where investigators hope to draw up sketches of the suspects based on the driver's description.

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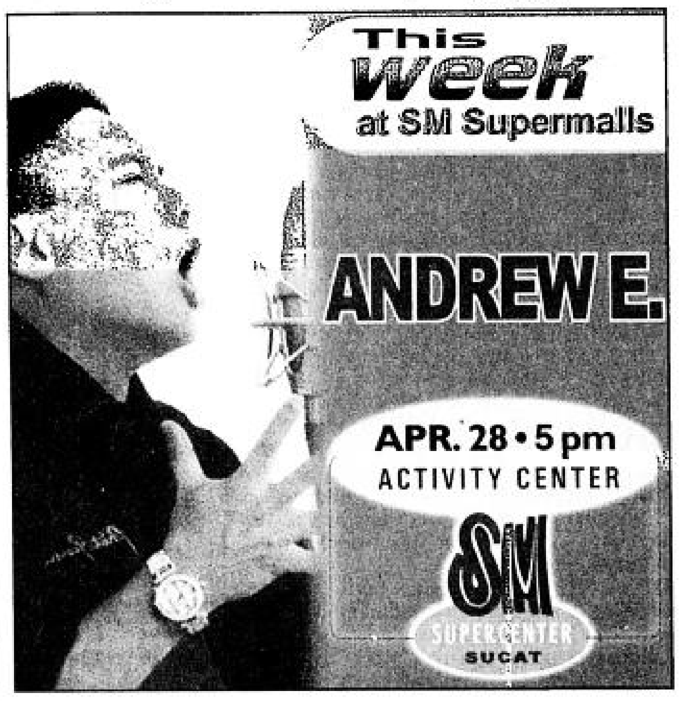

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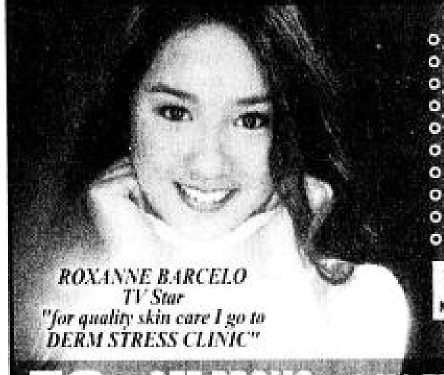

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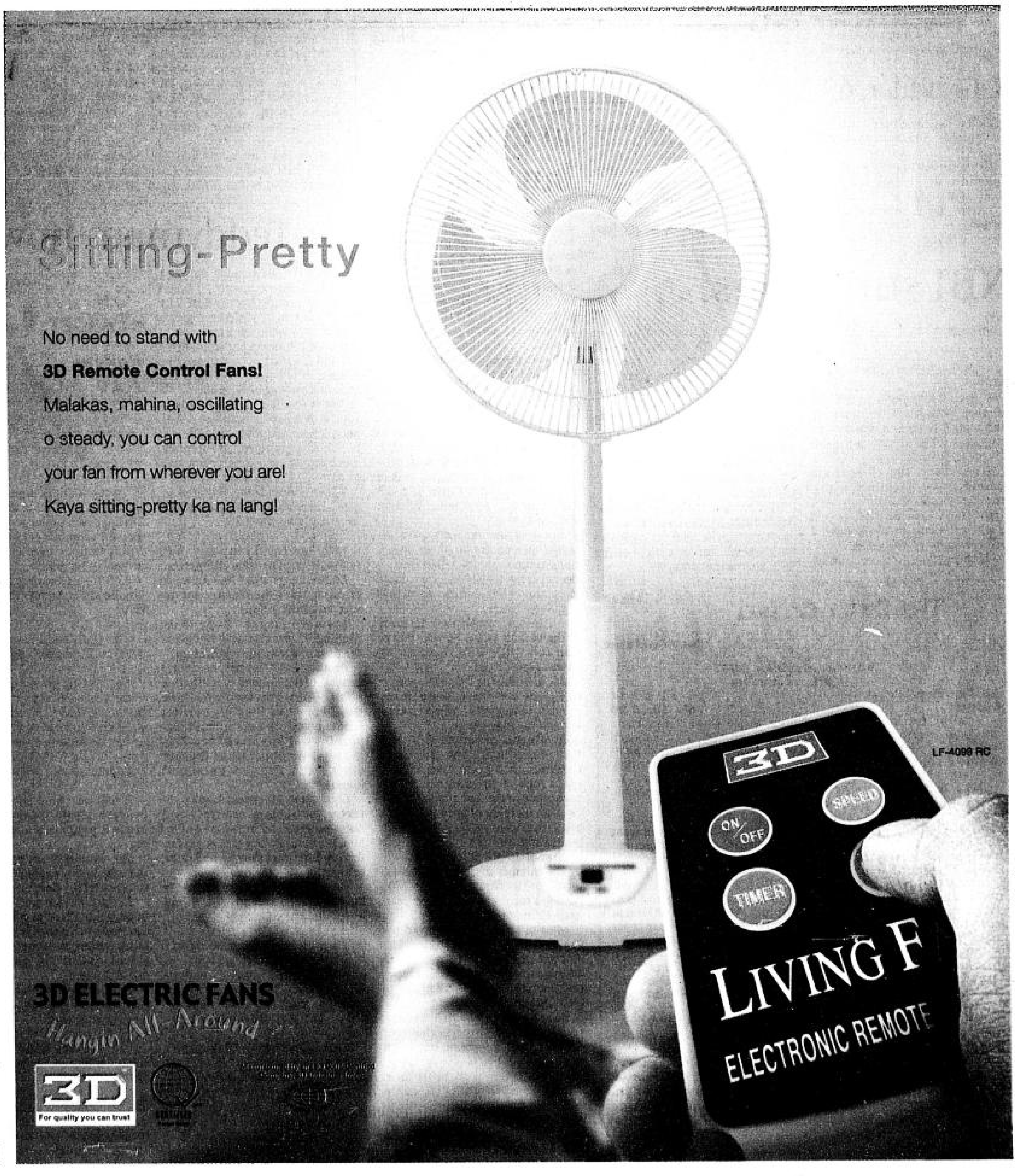

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Barricades to stop Nayon demolition

By Christian V. Esguerra

VOWING to use human barricades, Nayong Pilipino employees yesterday said they would do everything to stop the impending demolition of the theme park.

"We will do everything within the law to keep airport authorities from taking over Nayon," said Fernando Evangelista, president of the 60-member Nayong Pilipino Employees Union.

Authorities have allowed the demolition of the theme park to give way to a new airport terminal.

Evangelista slammed Charito Planas, the Nayon Pilipino executive director, for allowing the demolition without supposedly consulting the employees.

He said Planas should have ensured that all workers would receive proper compensation before she yielded 8.6 hectares of the theme park to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 for the airport's internal access road and parallel taxiway.

"Now we don't know what will happen to us," he said. "We don't know if we would still have our jobs when Nayon reopens."

Planas yesterday claimed there was no need to consult employees since the transfer of a portion of the theme park to airport authorities was a "management-to-management agreement."

She also assured that all employees would receive proper separation benefits amounting to their one-month salaries multiplied with the number of years they have spent with Nayon.

The compensation, she said, would come from the P50 million the Manila International Airport Authority will initially pay for the use of the theme park's 8.6-hectare property.

Nayon and airport officials were to sign yesterday morning the much-delayed memorandum of agreement that would pave the way for the theme park's demolition on May 5.

Planas said Nayon would remain open until May 15 since the signing was postponed until the end of the week.

The closure was originally set last Feb. 15, but Planas claimed she managed to stretch it to April 15, and now, May 15.

Evangelista said the delay did not do Nayon any good. "Visitors were only kept hanging since they didn't know when the park would really be closed. As a result, they decided not to visit anymore."

City Hall slams time-out try by Pandacan oil firms

By Jerome Aning

THE MANILA City government yesterday rejected plans by petroleum companies to conduct studies before moving out of the Pandacan oil depot complex.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said he would only accept studies if the oil firms promised first to move out of Pandacan.

But Councilor Don Ramon Bagatsing, head of the minority in the City Council, said he would oppose any move to extend the six-month deadline given to the oil firms to cease operating in the depot.

In a related development, Caltex (Philippines) Inc. confirmed it is considering a phased out reduction of its Pandacan terminal.

Atienza said the city government cannot wait for the results of studies. He said the oil firms "should officially communicate to us their decision to comply with the law and move out, then we would probably be willing to talk."

The mayor had confirmed in an earlier interview that some officials and representatives of the various oil firms using the depot have been lobbying City Hall to extend the June 30 deadline for ceasing their operations in the depot.

Atienza had said the city government was not unreasonable and was willing to take into consideration the concerns of the oil firms.

But Atienza insisted that "any discussion should be premised on a clear and unequivocal decision of the oil firms to move out."

"Otherwise, there is nothing to discuss," he added.

Caltex country chair Timothy Leveille said the alternative they are considering is "a trimmed down facility which would be an integral part of the phase reduction implemented over a specified time period."

Leveille said their approach would ensure "uninterrupted product flow" to the National Capital Region and three additional regions in Luzon.

Additionally, he added, it would eliminate hundreds of trucks that would have to be employed throughout Metro Manila once the depot is shut down.

Atienza explained that the intent of the law passed by the City Council November last year is very clear: ensure the safety of residents and spur genuine development of the area.

The law is to take effect on June 28 although City Hall has given the oil firms permits to operate until June 30.

"They (oil firms) were given six months but they didn't do anything," the mayor said. "If they insist on just conducting studies and refuse to make an official, clear and unequivocal decision to move out, then we would just have to enforce the law."

Councilor Bagatsing told the INQUIRER that Atienza should take a "tough stance" in enforcing the deadline.

Bagatsing said the six-month deadline technically ends on May 28, 2002 since the ordinance took effect on Dec. 28, 2001, 15 days after it was published in a national daily.

He bewailed that the committee formed to oversee the conversion of the depot from an industrial to commercial zone has yet to make public any of their plans.

Atienza chairs the body. Its members include Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna; the chair of Council's housing, urban development and resettlement committee; and the heads of the social welfare, health, public services, city planning, urban settlement, business promotion and legal office.

T. Gravador, 63

TEOFILO R. Gravador of Punta, Manila passed away on Sunday at age 63.

His body lies in state at the family residence in Barangay 896 Sto. Nino, Punta, Manila.

Interment will be on Saturday afternoon at the Mandaluyong Municipal Cemetery.

NBI summons. . .

From page A23

ment's Witness Protection Program (WPP).

Wycoco said the bureau will also summon WPP guard Gerry Lintan, who allegedly abused many other witnesses while they were in his protective custody.

His accuser, the 29-year-old housewife who is a principal government witness to a bloody land dispute in Pangasinan, is expected to go to the NBI today to have a medical exam, Wycoco said.

The housewife said on Tuesday that Lintan, alias Rustom Yap, raped her on March 26. She also claimed that Lintan told her many other government witnesses were physically abused while they were in the program.

The woman, her husband, and their 4-year-old daughter left the government program on April 1, after WPP chief Leo Dacera allegedly failed to immediately act on her complaint.

Wycoco said the NBI will submit its findings to the Department of Justice, which handles the WPP, and file criminal charges against erring WPP guards if warranted.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, April 25, 2002
St. Mark, Evangelist

1st Reading: **1 P 5:5-14**
Gospel: **Mk 16:15-20**

Jesus told his disciples, "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; the one who refuses to believe will be condemned. Signs like these will accompany those who have believed: in my Name they will cast out demons and speak new languages; they will pick up snakes and, if they drink anything poisonous, they will be unharmed. They will lay their hands on the sick and they will be healed."

So then, after speaking to them, the Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven and took his place at the right hand of God. The Eleven went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs which accompanied them."

Commentary

St. Mark, evangelist: giver of Good News. The Church exists for evangelization: to carry on the mission of Christ. To evangelize is to bring the spirit and the values of Christ into every branch of human activity. It involves a call to dialogue with brothers and sisters of other religious faiths, looking for all that can unite, strengthen and inspire us. The Spirit of God always unites, creates links, connections, locally, nationally, internationally; increasing awareness of the connections between human beings and all other beings in the web of life and the environment which sustains us. Evangelization is an invitation to a holistic view of life. We can separate Church and State, in terms of administration, but we cannot divide ourselves as human beings. "Christians" who practice corruption in civic life are not evangelized; they are not Christians, just churchgoers.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: claret@cn1.net; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missiona-ries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

Killer of two engineers captured

AFTER five years, justice finally caught up with security guard Amador C. Marinas, 33, who killed two Department of Agrarian Reform engineers in Pasig City in 1997.

National Bureau of Investigation director Reynaldo Wycoco said Marinas, alias Buting, of Nationwide Security Agency at DAR-Pasig City, was arrested for shooting engineers Leo Delima and Librado Arjona, both employees of the DAR-Pasig City's survey.

Marinas, who was presented to the media yesterday, admitted to the crime, adding that he got angry because Delima had slapped and berated him.

Assistant Regional Director Ruel Lasala, NBI-Narcotics Division chief, said the suspect killed the two engineers while they were having a drinking bout on the evening of Nov. 12, 1997 at the DAR-Pasig office.

"The victims were hit in different parts of their bodies. Thereafter, the suspect fled and went into hiding," Lasala said.

Since then, the NBI has been looking for the suspect, who threw away his gun after he escaped.

On Friday, the NBI received information that Marinas was in Barangay Puspos, Bantay, Ilocos Sur, Lasala said.

A team of NBI agents then went to Barangay Puspos on Saturday and they were able to arrest the suspect who was sleeping. ***Philip Tubeza and Edson Tandoc***

Nine fall in drug buy-bust

NINE suspected drug users and drug pushers were arrested the other day by the Makati City Drug Enforcement Unit in a buy-bust operation.

The suspects were identified as Freddie dela Cruz of 150 Metropolitan St., Barangay Tejeros, Makati City; Alfonso Cariang of 2642 Panama St., Barangay Sta. Cruz, Makati City; Cherry Tuazon of Kalayaan Street, Singkamas, Makati City; Liza Hernandez of Cagayan Street, Barangay Kasilawan, Makati City; Rizal Castro and Erick Castro of 18 Maya St., Barangay Rizal, Makati City; Laurentino Martinez Jr., of 26 Bakawan St., Project 7, Quezon City; Crizaldo Nepumuceno of 7778 Roxas St., Olympia, Makati City; and Jennifer Carin of 6475 Calumpit St., Justinville Village, Bacoor, Cavite.

Some of the suspects were arrested in separate buy-bust operations around the city with police officers posing as buyers. The others were caught while in the act of taking illegal drugs.

All the suspects are now detained at the Makati Police Station detention cell while DEU is preparing cases against them.

Meanwhile, the DEU said yesterday there was an increase in the number of suspects arrested for using and pushing drugs.

In a report submitted to Makati City police chief Supt. Alejandro Gutierrez, the DEU noted that there was a total of 161 drug-related arrests made in the first quarter of this year, an increase of around 24 percent from last year's 130. There were only 39 arrests in the first quarter of 2000.

The number of drug pushers arrested in the first quarter of 2001 doubled for the quarter this year, from 47 in 2001 to 95 in 2002.

Most of these cases involved the use of marijuana and shabu. The amount of confiscated marijuana doubled this year than the same period last year, from 34.12 grams to 64.53 grams.

But there was less shabu recovered from drug suspects this year than last year, a decrease from 41.5 grams to 21.5 grams.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, DEU operative SPO1 Antonio Polieros attributed the rise of arrested suspects to information given by barangay officials. ***Alcuin Papa and Tarra Quismundo***

Real cops won this one

By TJ Burgonio and Nelson Flores

THEY were kidnappers who allegedly wore police and military uniforms and addressed one another as "colonel" or "general" during their illicit operations.

Now three of them are dead while four other suspects have been arrested after they reportedly tried to shoot it out with real lawmen in Antipolo City late Tuesday afternoon. One of the lawmen was wounded in the encounter.

Police also rescued two Chinese-Filipino fish brokers from the clutches of the kidnappers, said to be members of the notorious "Batangas-Laguna" group.

Chief Supt. Jesus Versoza, deputy director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), said members of the kidnap group usually donned police and military uniforms, complete with badges, and addressed themselves as "colonel" or "general," "to give the impression that they were lawmen."

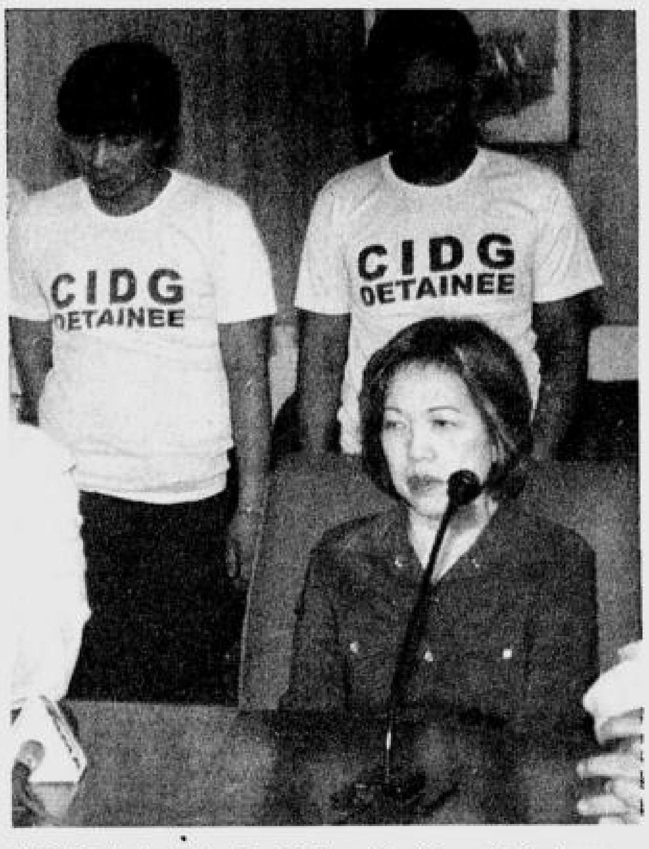
Police identified the slain suspects as Villavert Ayok, 30, the suspected kidnap leader, and security guard Eutiquio Romeo Saldaga, both residents of Antipolo City; and a certain Tamayo. All three were killed on the spot.

CIDG agent PO1 Honorio Piamonte was hit in the chest. He is in critical condition at an undisclosed hospital.

Police arrested brothers Perlito and Jaime Ayok, Cancio Cobillas, and one Arsenio Lacson, when they reportedly tried to escape at the height of the gun battle.

After the shootout, police found victims Elvira Tan Madla and Lorna Tan Landicho, still handcuffed in the safehouse. Madla is the wife of Boac, Marinduque Mayor Ricardo Madla.

Supt. Jose Dayco, Antipolo City police chief, said the suspects demanded P50 million in ransom from the victims' families.



KIDNAP victim Elvira Tan Madla, wife of Boac, Marinduque mayor Ricardo Madla, describes to newsmen how police found her still in handcuffs when they rescued her from the suspects' lair in Antipolo City on Tuesday. Two of her alleged kidnappers, brothers Perlito and Jaime Ayok, stand behind her as she describes her ordeal in their hands during a press conference in Camp Crame yesterday.

Acting on a tip, members of the CIDG and Antipolo police force on Tuesday raided the suspects' lair, an abandoned apartment in Sitio Putting Bato, Barangay Inarawan, Antipolo City,

The police called on the suspects to surrender, according to Senior Supt. Arturo Tolentino, Rizal Provincial Police Office director. But the suspects allegedly refused and, about 6:30 p.m., they opened fire on the police.

Although gagged, blindfolded and handcuffed throughout their captivity, the kidnap victims said they were not physically or sexually abused by their kidnappers.

Madla and Landicho, who worked as fishbrokers for RBL Fishing Corp., were snatched about 3 a.m. Monday on C-3 road while they were on their way home from the Navotas fish port.

Teddyman, how could you!

TEODORO "Teddyman" Benigno, columnist par excellence, is a very admirable man. A journalist with the gift of gab, he writes and speaks with the conviction of a priest at the pulpit. His integrity as a journalist is beyond question. A confessed communist in his youth, Benigno has retained his youthful idealism.

But it seems a contradiction in his character to be associated with people who are not his intellectual peers. Also, in terms of integrity, these people are pygmies compared to him.

Those people whom Benigno accompanied to Jaime Cardinal Sin were using his integrity.

***

Idol, how could you allow yourself to be used by such characters!

Each one of them has an ax to grind against the Macapagal-Arroyo administration.

Former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco was not given the post of agriculture secretary.

Pastor "Boy" Saycon, secretary general of the Council of Philippine Affairs (Copa), wanted a position more lucrative than his current post of board member at the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. This guy was a notorious name-dropper during the time of President Ramos.

Chief Supt. Florencio Fianza, director for human resources and doctrine development of the Philippine National Police, was not given the top PNP post that he had been badgering GMA for.

Teddyman, you were probably the only guy in that group who had no hidden agenda.

***

Reading Teddyman Benigno's column on Monday, one got the impression that the "Freedom Force" that he mentioned was a crusade for something other than the ouster of the present administration.

Most people who read Benigno's column never thought that Freedom Force wanted a military dictatorship, with civilians taking part in it.

During the time of President Cory, Benigno took swipes at renegade Lt. Col. Gregorio Honasan for trying to grab power from the housewife-president.

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

Now, Benigno is doing what he was denouncing before.

***

To top it all, Benigno lied when he said in his column that Cardinal Sin approved of the proposal to set up a civilian-military junta.

Sin denied Tuesday that he approved of the plot.

***Kahit na pakialamero itong si* Sin, he still respects the Constitution.**

***

The GMA administration is not perfect. It has its own shortcomings.

But which government since Marcos was perfect, anyway? Cory Aquino's? Fidel V. Ramos'? Who are you kidding, Teddy?

Just because you were press secretary during Cory's time, her government did not have faults?

***

It will take time for GMA to put everything in order. What she needs is patience and understanding.

She cannot clean up overnight the crap left by Erap. Yes, and even the crap left by Cory and El Tabaco!

As Cardinal Sin said in his letter to Benigno: "The problem is not in the leaders. Neither is the problem in the system the problem is in our values system. The problem is in our attitude."

Yes, Teddyman, the problem is that you and your cohorts cannot wait for your turn.

***

The sinister hand of former President Ramos can be seen in the Freedom Force.

Ramos is close to Saycon who was his unofficial public relations man. Fianza was one of Ramos' favorite subordinates at the defunct Philippine Constabulary.

And who is Peping Cojuangco? He was very influential during her sister's watch. His influence did not diminish during the Ramos administration.

***

GMA should watch her back. She should not trust people who pledge their friendship because they might be carrying daggers to stab her with the moment she turned her back on them.

Those people behind the plot to unseat hear—with the exception perhaps of Teddyman Benigno—were left out in the apportioning of juicy positions.

They ran to El Tabaco who probably gave them some words of encouragement.

***

An alleged notorious dollar blackmarketer in Binondo, Chua Tat, whose Filipino name is Benito Peñalosa, is back in business after hibernating for two years, according to my sources in the Chinese community.

Two years ago, Chua allegedly ran away with P480 million entrusted to him by people who bought dollars from him.

He was engaged in remitting money to people in the US and other countries whose Chinese relatives bought dollars from him. Getting 20 to 80 centavos per dollar that he sent abroad, Chua earned a fortune.

***

Dollar remittances to other countries are monitored by the Central Bank. One can only send a limited amount abroad because the government wants to conserve our dollar reserves.

Chua answered the problem of government control by selling dollars to his clients, mostly rich Chinese.

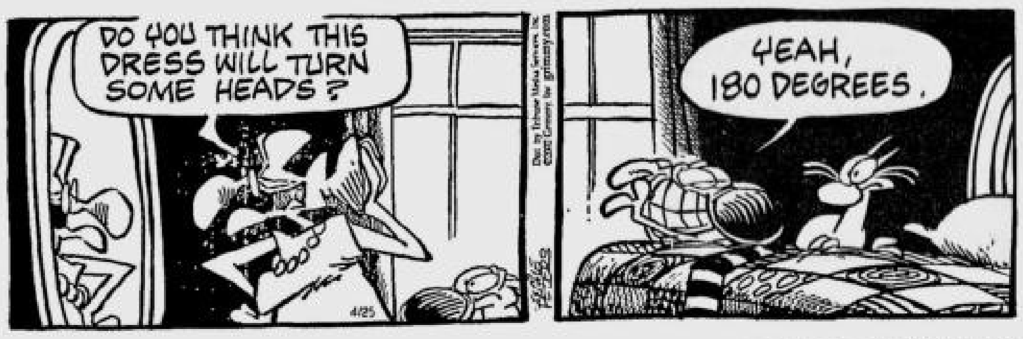
But he violated his client's trust, according to my binondo sources, when he did not remit the dollar equivalent of P480 million to the US and other countries. He ran away with the money, my Binondo sources say.

Some of the Chinese whom he allegedly duped, according to my sources, are planning to do him in.

COMICRelief

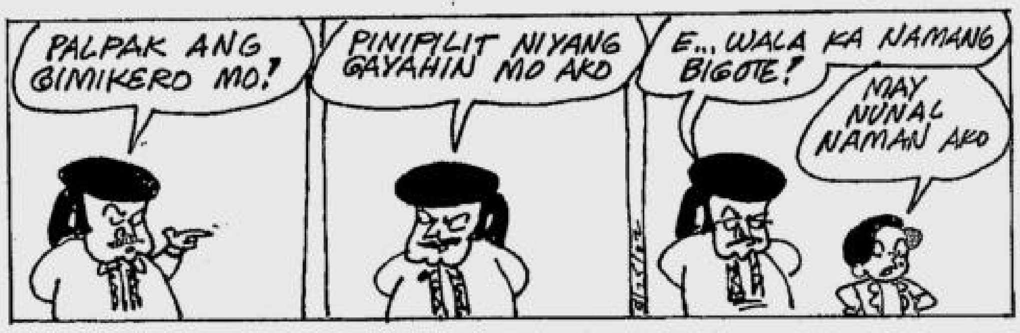
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


DO YOU THINK THIS DRESS WILL TURN SOME HEADS?
YEAH, 180 DEGREES.
4/25

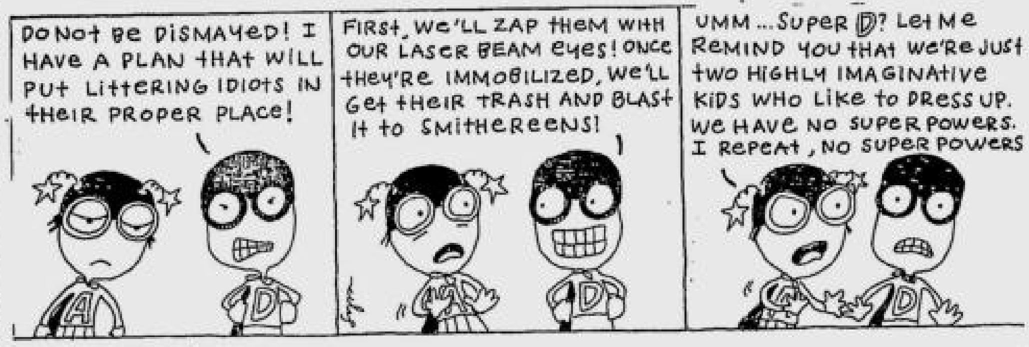
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PALPAK ANG GIMIKERO MO!
PINIPILIT NIYANG GAYAHIN MO AKO
E.., WALA KA NAMANG BIGOTE!
MAY NUNAL NAMAN AKO

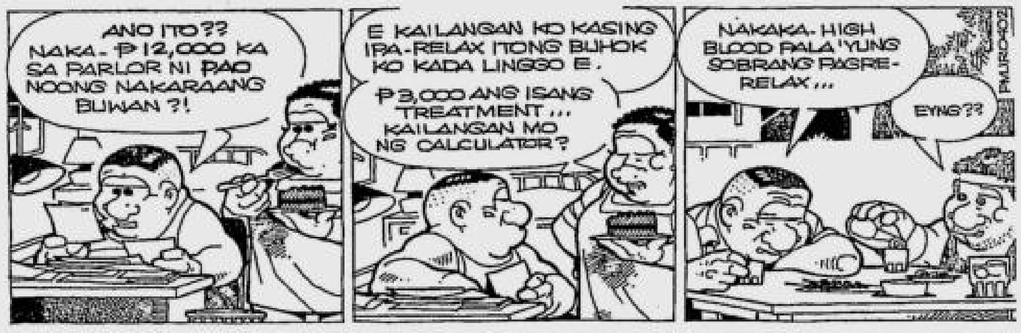
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DO NOT BE DISMAYED! I HAVE A PLAN THAT WILL PUT LITTERING IDIOTS IN THEIR PROPER PLACE!
FIRST, WE'LL ZAP THEM WITH OUR LASER BEAM EYES! ONCE THEY'RE IMMOBILIZED, WE'LL GET THEIR TRASH AND BLAST IT TO SMITHEREENS!
UMM ... SUPER D? LET ME REMIND YOU THAT WE'RE JUST TWO HIGHLY IMAGINATIVE KIDS WHO LIKE TO DRESS UP. WE HAVE NO SUPER POWERS. I REPEAT, NO SUPER POWERS
A
D

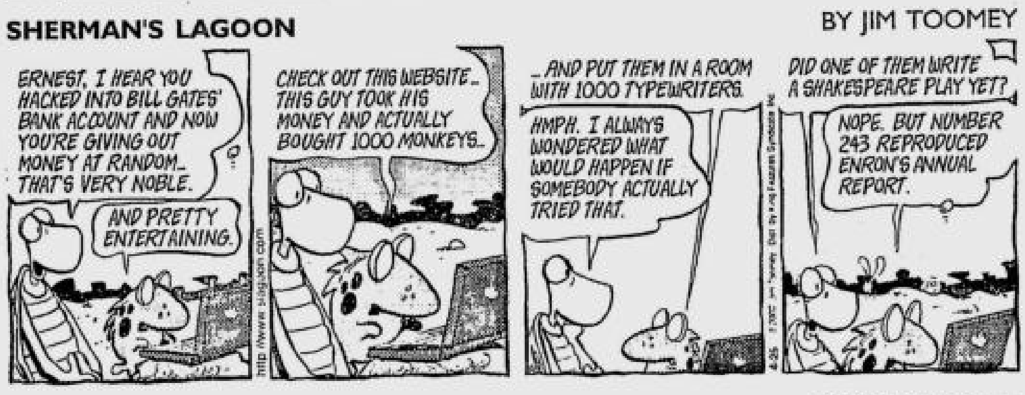
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANO ITO?? NAKA-₱12,000 KA SA PARLOR NI PAO NOONG NAKARAANG BUWAN ?!
E KAILANGAN KO KASING IPA-RELAX ITONG BUHOK KO KADA LINGGO E.
₱3,000 ANG ISANG TREATMENT ... KAILANGAN MO NG CALCULATOR?
NAKAKA-HIGH BLOOD PALA 'YUNG SOBRANG PAGRE-RELAX ...
EYNG??

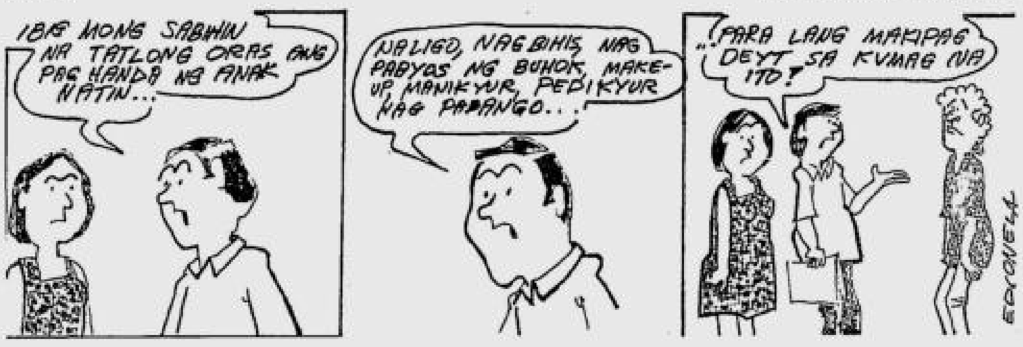
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


ERNEST, I HEAR YOU HACKED INTO BILL GATES' BANK ACCOUNT AND NOW YOU'RE GIVING OUT MONEY AT RANDOM... THAT'S VERY NOBLE.
AND PRETTY ENTERTAINING.
CHECK OUT THIS WEBSITE... THIS GUY TOOK HIS MONEY AND ACTUALLY BOUGHT 1000 MONKEYS...
...AND PUT THEM IN A ROOM WITH 1000 TYPEWRITERS.
HMPH. I ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF SOMEBODY ACTUALLY TRIED THAT.
DID ONE OF THEM WRITE A SHAKESPEARE PLAY YET?
NOPE. BUT NUMBER 243 REPRODUCED ENRON'S ANNUAL REPORT.

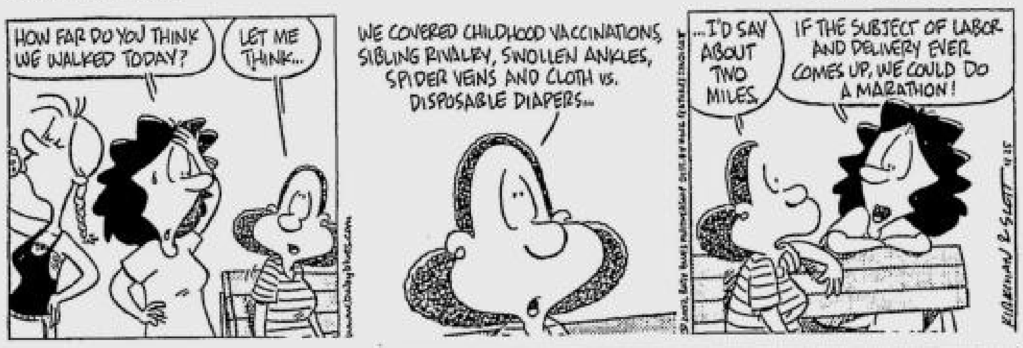
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


IBIG MONG SABIHIN NA TATLONG ORAS ANG PAG HANDA NG ANAK NATIN...
NALIGO, NAG BIHIS, NAG PABYOS NG BUHOK, MAKE-UP, MANIKYUR, PEDIKYUR NAG PABANGO...
...PARA LANG MAKIPAG DEYT SA KUMAG NA ITO?
DIONELA

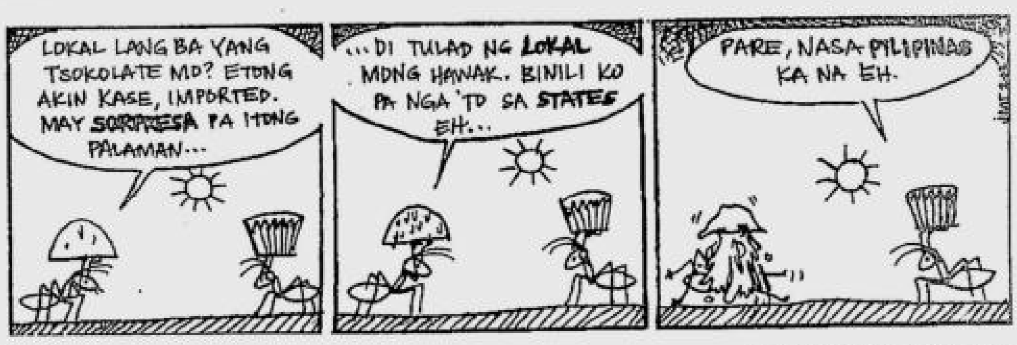
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HOW FAR DO YOU THINK WE WALKED TODAY?
LET ME THINK...
WE COVERED CHILDHOOD VACCINATIONS, SIBLING RIVALRY, SWOLLEN ANKLES, SPIDER VEINS AND CLOTH VS. DISPOSABLE DIAPERS...
...I'D SAY ABOUT TWO MILES.
IF THE SUBJECT OF LABOR AND DELIVERY EVER COMES UP, WE COULD DO A MARATHON!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

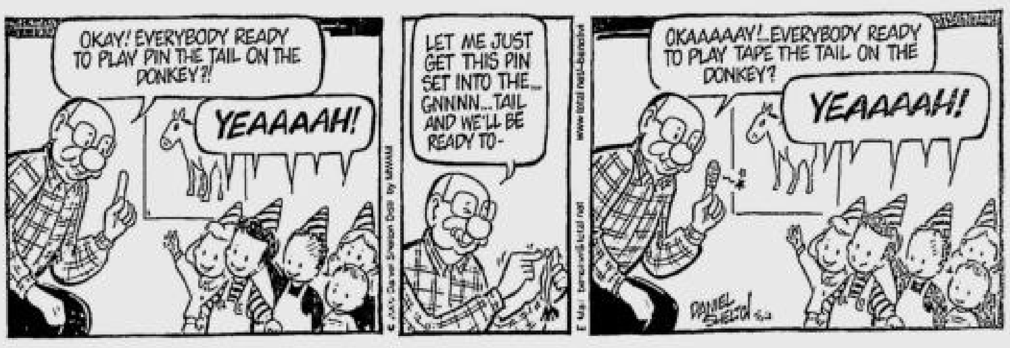
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


LOKAL LANG BA YANG TSOKOLATE MO? ETONG AKIN KASE, IMPORTED. MAY SORPRESA PA ITONG PALAMAN...
...DI TULAD NG LOKAL MONG HAWAK. BINILI KO PA NGA 'TO SA STATES EH...
PARE, NASA PILIPINAS KA NA EH.

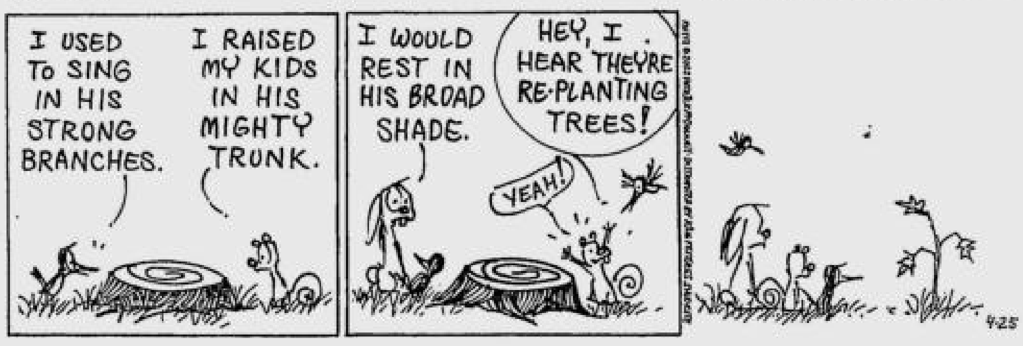
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


OKAY! EVERYBODY READY TO PLAY PIN THE TAIL ON THE DONKEY?!
YEAAAAH!
LET ME JUST GET THIS PIN SET INTO THE... GNNNN...TAIL AND WE'LL BE READY TO-
OKAAAAAY!...EVERYBODY READY TO PLAY TAPE THE TAIL ON THE DONKEY?
YEAAAAH!
DANIEL SHELTON

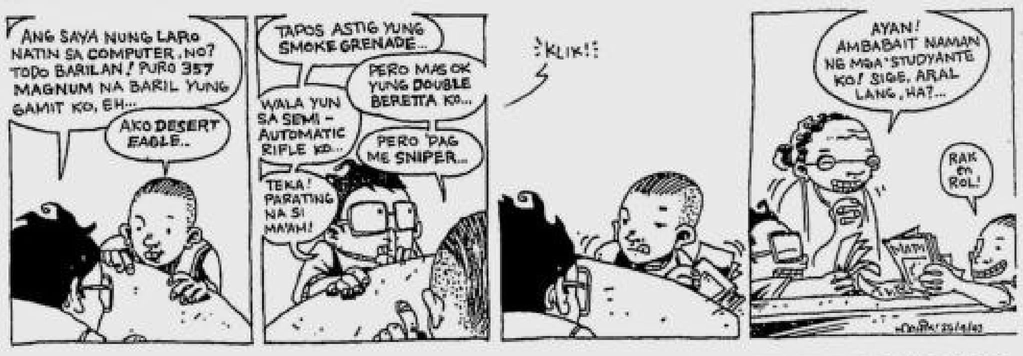
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I USED TO SING IN HIS STRONG BRANCHES.
I RAISED MY KIDS IN HIS MIGHTY TRUNK.
I WOULD REST IN HIS BROAD SHADE.
HEY, I HEAR THEY'RE RE-PLANTING TREES!
YEAH!
4-25

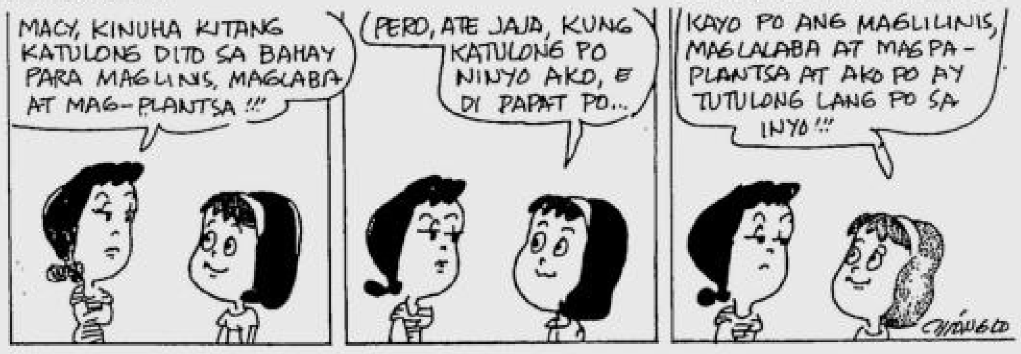
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ANG SAYA NUNG LARO NATIN SA COMPUTER, NO? TODO BARILAN! PURO 357 MAGNUM NA BARIL YUNG GAMIT KO, EH...
AKO DESERT EAGLE..
TAPOS ASTIG YUNG SMOKE GRENADE...
PERO MAS OK YUNG DOUBLE BERETTA KO...
WALA YUN SA SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLE KO...
PERO 'PAG ME SNIPER...
TEKA! PARATING NA SI MAAM!
KLIK!
AYAN! AMBABAIT NAMAN NG MGA STUDYANTE KO! SIGE, ARAL LANG, HA?...
RAK en ROL!
MATH

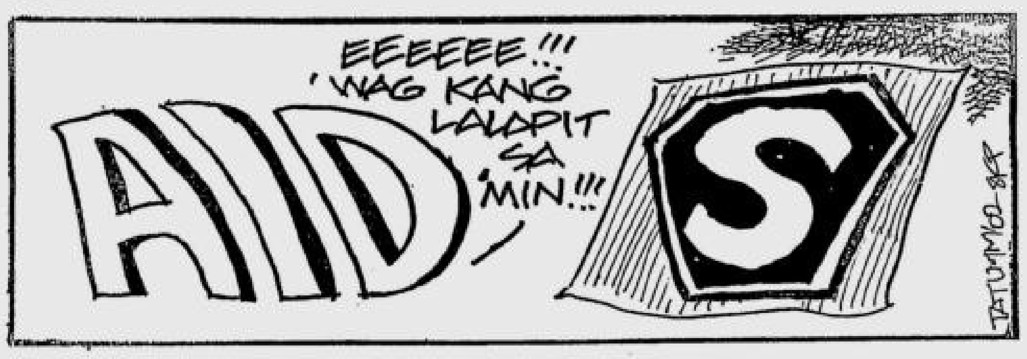
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MACY, KINUHA KITANG KATULONG DITO SA BAHAY PARA MAGLINIS, MAGLABA AT MAG-PLANTSA !!!
PERO, ATE JAJA, KUNG KATULONG PO NINYO AKO, E DI PAPAT PO...
KAYO PO ANG MAGLILINIS, MAGLALABA AT MAGPA-PLANTSA AT AKO PO AY TUTULONG LANG PO SA INYO !!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


EEEEEE!!! 'WAG KANG LALAPIT SA 'MIN!!!
AIDS
TATUM/PAPU

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Al Pacino, Ella Fitzgerald, Albert King, Talia Shire

Happy Birthday: Peculiar circumstances arise this year concerning legal or financial matters, taxes or joint deals. Work hard to get your portfolio in good shape. You can make extra cash if you invest in art objects. You should be concerned about chronic health problems. Get a second opinion. Your numbers are 15, 19, 20, 34, 45, 49

ARIES (March 21-April 19): A partner may try to take advantage of you to get what he or she wants. If you are selective in your friendships you will do much better today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Someone you thought you could trust may not be in your corner. Empty promises will result in frustration so be sure to get everything in writing .

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You will be chatty and eager to share whatever information you have. The more you have scheduled into your agenda the better.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You may not want to see things clearly especially at a personal level. Your home life is likely to be challenging. Be careful not to overreact or retaliate.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You can make a difference to others by being supportive and offering your services. This is a good day to enhance your reputation. You will be able to draw people to your cause.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't overspend and you won't have a problem today. You should be intent on achieving the most at work. If you want to change your job.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You have so much going for you. If you second-guess your ideas you will never get them off the ground. Push ahead and don't be afraid to let interested parties in on what you are doing.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Being secretive will pay off today. If you are discriminating and thorough you won't have a problem. Do not do business with those who are not likely to tell you the whole truth.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't believe everything you hear. Ask the opinion of a trusted friend. Get promises in writing. Your involvement in a group will lead to some interesting propositions.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Uncertainties surrounding work will result in delays. Be agreeable, especially when dealing with your personal life. Partners may overreact to whatever it is you suggest.

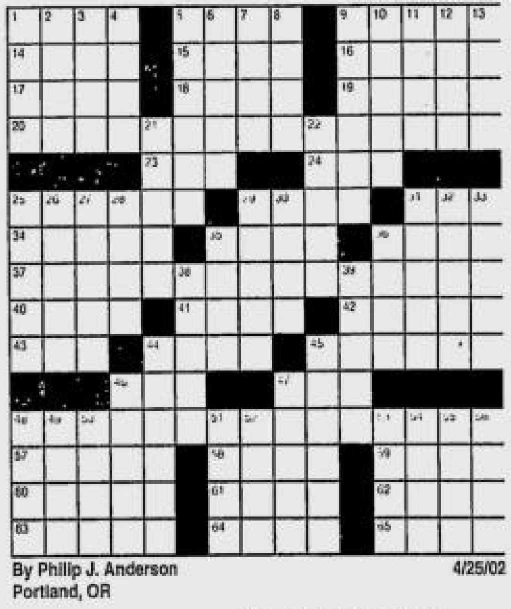
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You may have some wonderful insight to share with your peers but be careful how you present it. Someone might twist your words, take you the wrong way or oppose what you want to do.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You will do just fine as long as you are dealing with children, being creative or socializing. Once you step into an area that deals with finances you may find yourself losing ground. An investment is likely to backfire.

Birthday Baby: You will build your ideas on solid ground. You won't take anything for granted. You will question your knowledge and actively seek to acquire more throughout your life. You will have an interest in psychology and unconventional subjects.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

4/25/02

ACROSS

1 Corporate symbol
5 Moist
9 Poe's portentous bird
14 Touch on
15 Brickell or McClurg
16 Slur over
17 Thaw
18 Slip-on slipper
19 Spelunker
20 Great way to come back
23 Creative skill
24 Excitement
25 Anti-knock number
29 Raw sugar
31 Maj. Barbara's creator
34 Scottish landowner
35 Numskull
36 Asian sea
37 Great way to get started
40 "Norma" melody
41 Tuscany river
42 Canine malady
43 Help!
44 Decree
45 Functional undergarment
46 Big galoot
47 Fellow
48 Great way to go out
57 "Water Lilies" painter
58 Skip over
59 Writer on film
60 Pedestrian writing
61 Turkish monetary unit
62 Blind part
63 More rational
64 Actor Bates
65 Actress Garr

DOWN

1 Young sheep
2 Listen to
3 Swig
4 __ the Great
5 Reserved
6 Fully grown
7 Uris novel, "__ 18"
8 Ibsen drama, "__ Gynt"
9 Flow back
10 San Antonio landmark
11 Long live!
12 Garden of __
13 Nudnik
21 Bamboo lover
22 Italian poet
25 Earthenware crocks
26 Nile port
27 Maori figurines
28 Living space
29 Title for Dracula
30 Besides
31 Broad smiles
32 Erie Canal transport
33 Fall as ice
35 Mrs Copperfield
36 To a distance
38 Port of Israel
39 In with
44 Miss a step
45 Full-length tunic
46 Tubby plus
47 Greek destiny
48 Rascals
49 Asta's mistress
50 Presently
51 Author of "Nana"
52 Disney movie, "__ and the Detectives"
53 "The __ of Sheila"
54 Eye covetously
55 Stern section
56 Abominable snowman

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

C	A	T	S	■	D	A	N	T	E	■	S	T	A	B
L	I	E	U	■	E	M	A	I	L	■	W	I	N	O
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K	I	L	T	E	R	■	C	O	N	T	E	S	T	S
I	N	A	■	E	S	C	A	P	E	■	S	C	O	W
R	A	Y	E	D	■	A	R	E	■	T	A	H	O	E
O	N	E	S	■	F	I	E	S	T	A	■	O	L	D
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■	■	■	T	E	E	■	R	E	P	E	L	■	■	■
A	B	A	S	E	■	■	D	I	D	■	A	M	O	S
B	O	S	O	M	B	U	D	D	Y	■	L	A	M	A
E	N	I	D	■	U	S	A	G	E	■	E	T	A	L
S	E	A	S	■	B	A	Y	E	D	■	D	E	N	T

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4/25/02

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999
NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173888

1 SNOW DOGS
2 I AM SAM
3 SCORPION KING
4 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
5 ROLLERBALL
6 S2PID LUV
7 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
8 SCORPION KING

SM CENTERPOINT
7140522 -7161416

1 I AM SAM
2 SHOWTIME
3 SCORPION KING
4 DEVIL'S MASK
5 ROLLERBALL
6 S2PID LUV
7 SCORPION KING
8 BLADE 2
9 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
10 SNOW DOGS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1 SNOW DOGS
2 BLADE 2
3 I AM SAM
4 SCORPION KING
5 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
6 S2PID LUV
7 SCORPION KING
8 ROLLERBALL
9 MIMIC 2
10 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
11 MONTE CRISTO
12 ICE AGE

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 SCORPION KING
2 SHOWTIME
3 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
4 ROLLERBALL
5 I AM SAM
6 SCORPION KING
7 DEVIL'S MASK
8 BLADE 2
9 S2PID LUV
10 SNOW DOGS
11 MONTE CRISTO
12 SCORPION KING

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1 SCORPION KING
2 DEVIL'S MASK
3 ROLLERBALL
4 SCORPION KING
5 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
6 I AM SAM
7 SHOWTIME
8 MONTE CRISTO
9 S2PID LUV
10 SCORPION KING
11 BLADE 2
12 SNOW DOGS

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9285452

1 DEVIL'S MASK
2 SCORPION KING
3 SNOW DOGS
4 S2PID LUV
5 I AM SAM
6 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
7 SCORPION KING
8 ROLLERBALL
9 CLOSED
10 CLOSED
11 CLOSED
12 CLOSED

SM SOUTHMALL
8086888

1 ROLLERBALL
2 I AM SAM
3 SCORPION KING
4 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
5 SHOWTIME
6 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
7 S2PID LUV
8 SCORPION KING
9 SNOW DOGS
10 BLADE 2

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1 BLOW DRY
2 TIME MACHINE
3 EVIL WOMAN
4 MIMIC 2
5 S2PID LUV
6 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
7 BLADE 2
8 SCORPION KING

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1 BLOW DRY
2 CLOSED
3 TIME MACHINE
4 BLADE 2
5 MIMIC 2
6 SCORPION KING
7 CLOSED
8 EVIL WOMAN

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1 SHOWTIME
2 SCORPION KING
3 SCORPION KING
4 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
5 MONTE CRISTO
6 S2PID LUV

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8204975

1 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
2 SCORPION KING
3 S2PID LUV
4 ROLLERBALL

SM CINEMA GUADALUPE
8820984

1 ARAY
2 ROLLERBALL
3 SCORPION KING

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 SCORPION KING
2 ROLLERBALL
3 S2PID LUV
4 DEVIL'S MASK

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1 SCORPION KING
2 JOHN Q
3 WE WERE SOLDIERS
4 MIMIC 2
5 MAJESTIC
6 MONTE CRISTO

SM BICUTAN

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1
2
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4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

THE PODIUM

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1
2

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4 GOLD (DTS) SCORPION KING
5 GOLD (DOLBY) SCORPION KING
6 GOLD (SDDS) RETURN TO NEVERLAND
7 GOLD (DOLBY) I AM SAM
8 S2PID LUV
9 SNOW DOGS
10 BLADE 2

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1
2
3 (DTS)
4
5
6 (DTS)
Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA
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1 PISTOLERO
2 SCORPION KING
3 ROLLERBALL

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(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1 SCORPION KING
2 I AM SAM
3 DEVIL'S MASK
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL) ROLLERBALL
5 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL

METROPOLIS star
tel 850.4285

1 S2PID LUV
2 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
3 PISTOLERO
4 SCORPION KING
5 HOTDOG
6 ROLLERBALL
7
8

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 751-2010 TO 13

1 ROLLERBALL

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 S2PID LUV
2 TIME MACHINE

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
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1
2 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
3 ROLLERBALL

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1
A

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1 SCORPION KING
2 ROLLERBALL
3
4 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY) SCORPION KING
2
3
4
5 DEVIL'S MASK
6 I AM SAM
7 (DTS) SCORPION KING
8 (SDDS) ROLLERBALL
9 (DOLBY) RETURN TO NEVERLAND

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2 PISTOLERO

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1 S2PID LUV
2 PISTOLERO
3 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
4 (SDDS) SCORPION KING
5 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
6 (DOLBY) ROLLERBALL
7 (DTS) SCORPION KING
8 HARI NG SELDA
9 BLADE 2

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)
2
3
4 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
5 (SDDS) SCORPION KING
6 S2PID LUV
7 (DOLBY) ROLLERBALL
8 RETURN TO NEVERLAND

Gotesco Ortigas
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1 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
2 I AM SAM
3 (DTS) ROLLERBALL
4 S2PID LUV
5 (SDDS) SCORPION KING

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1 SCORPION KING

Sampaguita
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1 SCORPION KING

Dilson
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Dilson PISTOLERO
Lords HAYOP SA SEX APPEAL
Jennet

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1 SCORPION KING
2 ROLLERBALL
3 DEVIL'S MASK

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY) SCORPION KING
2 I AM SAM
3 PISTOLERO
4 RESERVE
5 RESERVE

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1
2
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4
5
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FRC Cinema
Talaba Bacoor Cavite

1
2

Berma
tel 879.2029

1 SCORPION KING
2 PISTOLERO

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1
2

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
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1 S2PID LUV
2 SHOWTIME
3 (DTS) SCORPION KING

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
2 (DTS) ROLLERBALL
3 (DOLBY) SCORPION KING
4 SHOWTIME

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1 ROLLERBALL
2 (DOLBY) SHOWTIME
3 (DTS) SCORPION KING
4 RETURN TO NEVERLAND

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 S2PID LUV
2 SCORPION KING
3 SOON TO OPEN
4 SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1 ICE AGE
2 SCORPION KING
3 (DOLBY) S2PID LUV
4 (DTS) TIME MACHINE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS) ROLLERBALL
2 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
3 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
4 (DTS) SCORPION KING

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY) SCORPION KING
2 ROLLERBALL
3 (DTS) SHOWTIME
4 PAROLA
5 S2PID LUV

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1 ROLLERBALL
2 SCORPION KING
3

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1 SCORPION KING
2 ROLLERBALL
3 RETURN TO NEVERLAND

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1 SHOWTIME
2 S2PID LUV
3

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1
2
3

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS) MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
2 (DTS) SCORPION KING

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1 PAROLA
2 S2PID LUV
3 SCORPION KING

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 S2PID LUV
2 TIME MACHINE
3 COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
4 E.T.

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX) COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
2 S2PID LUV
3 (DTS) SCORPION KING
4 SHOWTIME

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6 ROLLERBALL
7 SNOW DOGS
8 MONTE CRISTO
9 BLADE 2
10 SHOWTIME

Ermita
536 -7809- 12

1 SCORPION KING
2 BLADE 2
3 ROLLERBALL
4 DEVIL MASK
5 SHOWTIME
6 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
7 I AM SAM

Metro East -
Marcos hway 682- 8193 / 8780

1 SCORPION KING
2 DEVIL MASK
3 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
4 I AM SAM
5 ROLLERBALL
6 SNOW DOGS
7 SHOWTIME
8 BLADE 2

Novaliches
935- 3229 - 30

1 SCORPION KING
2 E.T.
3 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
4 I AM SAM
5 ROLLERBALL
6 E.T.
7 S2PID LUV
8 SHOWTIME

Imus
471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1 SCORPION KING
2 SNOW DOGS
3 ROLLERBALL
4 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
5 I AM SAM
6 S2PID LUV

Bacolod
441- 0453 / 0459

1 SCORPION KING
2 BLADE 2
3 ICE AGE
4 EVIL WOMAN
5 S2PID LUV
6 MIMIC 2

Iloilo
336- 8077 - 78

1 SCORPION KING
2 BLADE 2
3 EVIL WOMAN
4 TIME MACHINE
5 BLOW DRY
6 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL

Star Mills-
Sn Fernando, Pamp 875- 1927
961-5318 / 5770

1 SCORPION KING
2 MONTE CRISTO
3 SHOWTIME
4 SCORPION KING
5 MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
6

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	S2PID LUV
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	SCORPION KING
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	ROLLERBALL
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	SCORPION KING
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	RETURN TO NEVERLAND
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	DEVIL'S MASK
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	I AM SAM
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	SCORPION KING
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	HALIK SA LUPA / SUGAR AND SPICE
ODEON	SCORPION KING
ODEON-2	ITLOG
ROBEN	MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
TANDEM-1	ITLOG
TANDEM-2	IKA-7 GLORYA
TIMES	BEHIND ENEMY LINES / SUPREME SUNCTIONS
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
REMAR	MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
REMAR-2	SCORPION KING
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SCORPION KING
B	MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
C	PISTOLERO
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	SCORPION KING
CINEMA-2	3RD GERMAN FILM WEEK
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	IKA-7 GLORYA
CINEMA-2	HOTDOG THE MOVIE
CINEMA-3	MASARAP BA ANG BAWAL
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SCORPION KING
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	SNOW DOGS
CINEMA-6	ICE AGE
CINEMA-7	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
CINEMA-8	E.T.
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SCORPION KING
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SCORPION KING
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	ROLLERBALL
CINEMA-12	RETURN TO NEVERLAND
CINEMA-14	I AM SAM
CINEMA-15	S2PID LUV
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	SNOW DOGS
CINEMA-2	SCORPION KING
CINEMA-3	RETURN TO NEVERLAND
CINEMA-4	ROLLERBALL
CINEMA-5	SHOWTIME
CINEMA-6	I AM SAM
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

Aklan plays host to summer musical

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas Symphony Orchestra (USTSO) and singer Anna Fegi headline an enchanting musical in Aklan as the province plays host to "Symphony of Summer," a two-hour musical concert of well-loved Filipino classics and Broadway hits.

The concert is one of the highlights of the 46th Aklan Foundation Day celebrations.

Directed by Manolet Garcia, the musical is scheduled from 6 to 8 tonight at the Kalibo Town Plaza and April 27 at the Boracay White Beach.

The concert will also feature tenor Lemuel de la Cruz and soprano Rachelle Gerodias.

The USTSO consists of 70 university students with 15 faculty and staff members. Majority of the student-members are former winners of national music competitions such as the NAMCYA, while some have had successful stints with world-class youth ensembles, the Asian Youth Orchestra and the World Youth Orchestra.

The USTSO is a resident performing group of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, which subsidizes its training program. The orchestra regularly performs at the CCP and assists in its outreach program. It also serves as a pool for additional players as the needs of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra dictate.

The USTSO has appeared in numerous concerts including televised performances in "Concert at the Park" and "Paco Park Presents," aside from its thrice-yearly presentations at the CCP.

Celebrating its 46th founding year, Aklan boasts of a culture steeped in rich history and tradition. Dating back to the year 1212, the famous Ati-atihan festival is celebrated every second Sunday after the Epiphany and is one of the most awaited events in January. It pays tribute to the Feast of the Santo Niño, where celebrants paint their faces with black soot and wear bright, outlandish costumes as they dance in revelry during the last three days of this two-week long festival.

Aklan is also the place where one can find Boracay, touted as the world's best tropical beach with its warm, blue waters and a palm-fringed four-kilometer stretch of white sand beach and a healthy marine life underneath the seas.

"Symphony of Summer" is sponsored by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Philippine Tourism Authority, Department of Tourism, WG&A Philippines, Asian Spirit, and Sun Village Boracay Resorts.

My mother . . .

From page A28

band nights, I opted to invite my mom on a Monday.

Albert, Bojo and the rest of the gang—**Roman**, **Nestor**, **Lou**, **Rey**, **Nino** and **Grace**—made my mom feel right at home. For a moment there, I felt like a teener all over again when she was thanking my friends for watching over me. I wish I could prolong that feeling.

I know she was tempted to interrogate them about who my dates have been but she restrained herself. Every mother has that force of habit. But as time passes, moms can unlearn some habits to make them more of a friend to their children. We should not be too much of a mother that we are unable to become a pal to our kids.

Thanks, Ma, for your quiet understanding.

My mom and her friends Dennis Adobas and Albert enjoyed the soothing sounds of A-strings (Nino Alejandro, Paulo and Leonard joined by young actor **Cholo Escaño** on bongos). Their music is the perfect way to snap out of the Monday blues.

Soon enough, my beloved friend Bojo, **Red Sternberg** (of T.G.I.S fame), and Nino joined our table. My mom, being the acknowledged "Queen of Intrigues," has a knack for turning the simplest of conversations into a controversial one. But what's endearing about her is that she does not come across as obtrusive. She has a way of digging up things people would not ordinarily admit. It never fails to give me a sense of pride when I see people in and out of the biz sit up and pay attention to my mom.

Pardon me but I don't mean to brag. That's just the way she is. Ask anyone in the industry. Who can top an icon like her?

She opened the first door for most of the TV talk show hosts today. Seeing her in animated conversation with stars off-cam made me shock-proof early on. I never dreamt of following in her footsteps. My original dream was to become an interpreter at the United Nations; that's why I took up Linguistics (major in French), but I have no regrets at all.

I remember the day my mom asked me to host "Movie Magazine" and I was not too keen about it. Now that I really think about it, I'm glad I gave in to her request. How else can I show her how proud I am to be her daughter but by carrying on what she started? I don't mind suffering by comparison. Just to be compared to my mom is honor enough. I may not even reach half of what my mom has, but just being given the chance to shine gives me all the fulfillment I ever hope for.

I guess all celebrity children like me will agree that for us who are used to being in the shadow of our famous parents, it is a blessing when they also let us shine.

Here's to more bonding sessions, Ma!

Personal

THANKS for two magical months, Lud! You keep me spellbound!

For feedback, email luvludg@hotmail.com, friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com, wateringhole2000@yahoo.com

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2	I AM SAM	12:25, 3:10, 5:55, 8:40 P13

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1 SCORPION KING	1 ROLLER BALL	4 SHOWTIME	1 RETURN TO NEVERLAND	1 SCORPION KING
2 I AM SAM	2 SCORPION KING	5 RETURN TO NEVERLAND	2 SCORPION KING	2 I AM SAM
3 ROLLER BALL	3 SCORPION KING 11:20 am/ 1:25 pm/ 3:30/ 5:35/ 7:40/ 9:45 GUARANTEED SEATS	6 I AM SAM	3 I AM SAM	3 RETURN TO NEVERLAND
4 DEVIL'S MASK		7 SNOW DOGS	4 Onstage LANI ON SATGE APRIL 20, 26 & 27 9:00 PM	4 ROLLER BALL
				5 SCORPION KING

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS
MAKATI ALABANG CEBU

SPIDERMAN LIVE!
MAKATI
Live Action Show
May 1, 3 & 4 - 2:00pm, 4:00pm & 6:00pm
Glorietta Activity Center
Meet & Greet Schedules
May 1, 3 & 4 at the Cinema Lobby
2:30pm - Greenbelt 1 • 4:30pm - Glorietta 1 • 7:30pm - Glorietta 4
ALABANG
Live Action Show and Meet & Greet Schedules
May 5, 6 & 7 - 11:00am, 3:30pm & 4:30pm
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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

WAVES of songs and dances are performed by (from left) Francis, Kyla, Geneva Cruz, Ara Mina, Verni Varga, Jaya, Anna Fegi and Jeffrey Hidalgo.

RAPT IN RAP, Francis M performs.

PHOTOS BY EDWIN BACASMAS

PASIG YEAR 7 CONCERT

A river runs through it

By Celine R. Madamba

THE PASIG River, even in its current state, still often inspires artists. In the paintings of great masters such as Hidalgo and Amorsolo, the Pasig River is part of their visions of a perfect world.

What if we were to update these nostalgic visions and make them relevant to the young?

This thought encouraged GMA Network Inc. and the Clean and Green Foundation-Piso Para sa Pasig to organize the Muling Aawit ang Pasig Year 7 concert, which was held last Friday, April 19, in Malacañang Park.

Topbilled by premiere performers Jaya, Anna Fegi, Verni Varga, Geneva Cruz, Jeffrey Hidalgo, Francis M, Kyla, Ara Mina, and Michael V., the concert used the stage as a canvass to create a fusion of art, song, dance and humor amidst the backdrop of Filipino masterpieces.

Interpreted in music and dance were Felix R. Hidalgo's "La Banca" and "La Barqa de Aquironte" as symbols of the river's past, Ang Kiu Kok's "Man on Fire" series as a symbol of the river's present, and Fernando Amorsolo's "Women Bathers" as a hopeful vision of the river's future. Also featured were the artworks of the young masters of the On the Spot Artists Association, among others.

Continuing the tradition begun by the Ramos government in hosting the concert at the Palace grounds, President Macapagal-Arroyo graced the occasion and celebrated with hundreds of concertgoers and environmental advocates.

"We are happy that we are holding this event at the original home of this long running concert series for the Pasig and the environment," Clean and Green Foundation treasurer and trustee Doris Magsaysay-Ho said.

"Malacañang is the most logical venue for this event because the palace, which was originally a villa owned by a wealthy Spaniard, was built on its site precisely because of the beauty of the place provided by the river," Magsaysay-Ho explained.

Concert organizer Clean and Green Foundation, chaired by former First Lady Amelita M. Ramos and co-chaired by First Gentleman Jose Miguel T. Arroyo, is hopeful the President will carry through the river's revival.

The President ordered the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to exercise direct supervision of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission through Executive Order No. 72, signed last February.

With the President at her table, aside from Magsaysay-Ho and Ms Hawaii-Philippines Maribel Apuya who was paying her a courtesy call, were Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, MMDA Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. and his wife, Metro Manila Mayors Spouses Foundation chair Cora Abalos; Dennis Valdes, director of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and president of INQUIRER Publications; and CGFI trustees Boots Anson-Roa and Col. Jun Cruz (ret.).

This year's concert also paid tribute to two of the country's greatest musical masters who died recently—Lucio San Pedro and Levi Celerio—by including their timeless collaboration, "Ugoy ng Duyan," a song that captures the Filipino spirit.

With its edgy and creative choreography, diverse song numbers and breathtaking production scenes, this year's concert gave classic masterpieces a contemporary appeal for the young and viewers a glimpse into the exciting possibilities of the river's future.

PRESIDENTIAL TABLE has the President; GMA 7 EVP Jimmy Duavit, CGFI trustee Boots Anson-Roa, and PDI director and Inquirer Publications president Dennis Valdes.

PASIG PAINTER is congratulated by the President for his winning entry.

Telethon

VIEWFINDE

Nestor U. Torre

"ER" remains the most popular TV drama on primetime in the States but, after eight years, its makers have to hustle harder to keep the show fresh and eventful.

One gambit that has worked well for the show is the occasional infusion of new blood to replace characters who have overstayed their welcome on the show, or are portrayed by actors who want to move on in their careers.

In past years, headliners who have left the show include **George Clooney**, **Gloria Reuven** and **Julianna Marguiles**. As for the current season of the show, it's seen the departure of **Eriq La Salle** (Dr. Peter Benton), who was with the medical series since its start in 1994.

Since Benton has hung up the "Doctor Is Out" sign, his girlfriend, Dr. Cleo Finch (played by **Michael Michele**) has also made her exit.

And, this May, Dr. Mark Green (**Anthony Edwards**) will similarly bow out of the series. This is a particularly big deal for "ER" loyalist, because Edwards is one of the most popular actors left on the show, and was also with the program since its inception.

Edwards departure will leave **Noah Wylie** (Dr. John Carter) as the only remaining original member of the cast still with the show.

Why do actors leave shows as popular as "ER"? Because, after years on the series, they have done their assigned characters to death, and are suffering from cabin fever, despite their million-dollar salaries.

Other veteran headliners want to get away from the rigorous taping schedules that drastically limit their other career and personal prospects. So, they're willing to give up all that money just to free their schedules, so they can do something else for a change!

Who will be taking their place? Not to worry, there are scores of gifted and gorgeous actors ready to play new characters in the series. Since "ER" remains popular, these newcomers should themselves become well-known in good time, so the show's stellar appeal should remain high.

Meanwhile, a brand-new cop show, "The Shield," is getting more than its share of attention on US TV this season. Its appeal is decidedly perverse, because its protagonist, LAPD Detective Vic Mackey (played by **Michael Chiklis**) is more villain than hero.

The idea of a streetwise and corrupt policeman headlining a cop show may disturb some people, but most viewers find it compelling and provocative. And Chiklis' overpowering performance rivets viewers' attention to the screen from start to finish.

"The Shield" can be viewed in the States on the FX network. If it continues to click with viewers, you can expect it to play on screens here, as well.

Curtain falls, curtain rises

"CATS," the hit musical, will end its run on London's West End on May 11, exactly 21 years after it opened. **Andrew Lloyd Webber**'s eminently successful show has been seen in various productions all over the world by a staggering number of people—50 million in all. This proves that theater has become very big business, indeed.

Just as "Cats" comes to the end of its ninth life, a small show opens on Broadway that also has the makings of a big hit. "Mr. Goldwyn" is a play about Hollywood film mogul **Samuel Goldwyn**, whose studio, MGM, produced many musical and comedy hits in decades past.

Goldwyn is played by the popular comedian, **Alan King**, who is praised in early reviews of the play for his masterful timing, energy and wit. The MGM studio owner is inherently a funny character because he is known as Hollywood's Mr. Malaprop.

Thus, the play's script goes to town with his famous malapropisms, aside from adding some of its own. Some classic "goldwynisms:"

"I don't care if my pictures don't make a dime, so long as everybody comes to see them."

"No one should write his autobiography until he's already dead!"

"I was always independent, even when I had partners."

"Hollywood is like ancient Egypt. It's a golden empire built in the desert by a handful of men. Great men. Like Pharoahs. But, Jewish."

"Every director bites the hand that lays the golden egg!"

"The reason so many turned up for the funeral of Louis B. Mayer is that they wanted to make sure he was dead!"

"I made the movies, William Wyler only directed them."

What did his contract stars really think of Samuel Goldwyn? **Farley Granger** doesn't mince words: "Goldwyn was a monster. Once, I went to something like 24 cities in 20 days to promote a film.

"He really drove us hard. The publicity man with me had a nervous breakdown in Kansas City—the white coats just came and took him away! I was like a broken record. I kept saying, `Mr. Goldwyn is such a great producer, he's like a daddy to me.' All this bullshit that I had to say!

"I used to feel so guilty about it. I didn't think our films were that great! Why was I telling other people to see them? I used to have great conflicts about that. But it was what we stars had to do. We really were property. As a piece of script was."

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ROLLERBALL - R 18 11:25, 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45, 9:50	SHOWTIME - P 13 1:05, 3:15, 5:25, 7:35, 9:45	I AM SAM - GP 11:30, 2:10, 4:50, 7:30, 10:10

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My mother, the icon

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

I'VE been living apart from my mom for two years now.

It's been tough but quite fulfilling. After all, there are things that only a mother can do.

It's true that sometimes you don't learn anything in someone's presence, but in their absence, you will. The "sermons/advice" my mom used to give me when we were still under one roof usually went unheeded. But now that she's not around me 24 hours a day, I can almost hear her signature throaty voice reverberating in the walls of my Bridget Jones pad.

What seemed nonsensical to me then is now my mantra.

When I'm drowning in my thoughts and tears and bills, it's as if a life vest is suddenly thrown my way when I think of my ma's "mommyisms."

There are times we both get engrossed in the daily grind and we fail to text or call each other, but after all the "roller-coaster" years, my relationship with my mom has reached a certain level of interconnectedness that makes speaking unnecessary. Unlike before when the slightest provocation would make us get into each other's nerves, now, even the littlest memory of what it was like to live in the same house makes us appreciate each other more.

Of course, I've always loved my mom, but only after I moved out of her nest did I start to genuinely like her. I see her through different eyes now.

Some friends ask me, "Why don't you just move back in with your mom since you are both single mothers already?" I explain, "Who would not want to stay in her comfort zone forever? But if you refuse to get out of it, it will soon turn into a danger zone because you can't grow that way."

People close to my mom and me know how overly-protective she was during my teens. A maid would even wait for me outside the bathroom while I took a shower, and I was never allowed to go out on dates unchaperoned (ask my first boyfriend, **William Martinez**). That's why they got the shock of their lives when I began to try my own wings.

Looking back, I realize that my mom was only giving me something I would miss now. I can no longer relive those "princess" days but I recapture them in my memory when I browse through old albums to get me through my solo nights.

I thought of inviting my mom to join me in my favorite hangout, Friends @ the Square (St. Francis Square, Mandaluyong) last Monday night. Knowing that she has long tired of the party scene, I was pleasantly surprised when she agreed to go. I wanted her to meet my "second family" at Friends, headed by **Albert Nocum** and **Bojo Molina**. Mondays are Acoustic Nights at Friends. Since it was not going to be as "noisy" as the other

MY MOTHER/ A27

BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo ● Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

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Sy in talks to buy big Boni property

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE FAMILY of retail tycoon Henry Sy is negotiating with Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. to buy a 20-hectare property within the central business district of the 150-ha Fort Bonifacio Global City.

Sy plans to use the property as part of the expansion of his SM retail chain.

SM would also open next year two new mid-sized malls in Marilao, Bulacan, and Lucena, Quezon, as part of the two-malls-a-year expansion binge of the country's biggest mall empire, SM Prime Holdings Inc. executive vice president Hans Sy also said in an interview.

The SM group spends at least P2 billion each year to construct new malls, on top of at least P1.5 billion budget for additional landbanking.

For this year, the two new malls to be opened by the group are in Bicutan and Cagayan de Oro.

The most aggressive expansion would be for 2004, when the Mall of Asia in Roxas Boulevard would jumpstart operations, alongside two other mid-sized malls, including one in Dasmariñas, Cavite, Sy said.

The mid-sized malls being built by SM, Sy noted, would have between 80,000 and 100,000 square meters of mall space.

Asked about the deal being hatched with FBDC, Sy said negotiations were still going on, but he gave an indicative lot size. "The last time we talked was for about 20 hectares of property," Sy said.

"The property we usually buy is 20 hectares if we build a mall. With that area, we normally end up with about 100,000 square meters (of mall space) just like SM South Mall," he explained.

He did not say which companies within the SM group would acquire the property. Aside from SMPH, the Sy family controls publicly listed SM Development Corp. and unlisted SM Investments Inc. The group likewise recently bought a majority stake in leisure estate developer Highlands Prime Leisure Properties Inc., a spin-off of Belle Corp.

Sy also said the group had yet to decide on what development to put up in Fort Bonifacio.

If finalized, the 20-ha sale would be the biggest lot sale deal in the Fort Bonifacio Global City, topping the P2.5-billion deal clinched with the group of property developer Carlos Rufino and Megaworld Corp. covering a 5-ha property known as the Bonifacio compound. It would also account for about 13 percent of the total Global City area.

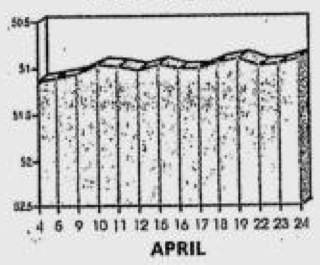
Rufino's group paid about P50,000/sq.m. for the property, which is envisioned to be a mixed-use complex with rows of residential towers and retail complex similar to Megaworld's Eastwood City in Libis.

But if the property eyed by the SM group would be within the Fort Bonifacio retail center near the S&R group, a property analyst estimated that the Sy family might have to pay about twice the P50,000/ sq.m. paid by Rufino's group for an undeveloped property within the Global City.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P50.895 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 24, 2002

¥130.15 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 24, 2002

GOLD: $304.30/304.80
per ounce Hong Kong,
April 24, 2002

GRAPHS BY ROBERT ANDRES

STOCK MARKET

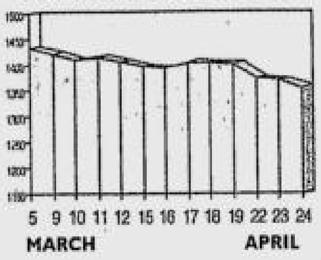
Shares down 1.1%

SHARE prices closed 1.1 percent lower yesterday on late selling of index heavyweight PLDT and security concerns, analysts said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index dropped 14.54 points to 1,354.82.

PLDT fell amid rumors that its $350-million bond offering overseas would have interest rates considerably higher than the US benchmark interest rates.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

"With the indicative spreads quite larger than expected, it looks like the cost of refinancing PLDT's debt would be higher," a dealer from a local brokerage said.

There are also concerns that followers of detained ex-President Joseph Estrada may try to stir up violence on May 1, the anniversary of a bloody riot they instigated near the presidential palace last year.

"Nobody knows what will happen come May 1," said Manny Cruz of Mark Securities Corp.

AFP

Daewoo keen on South Luzon railway project

By Abigail L. Ho

DAEWOO International Corp. will conduct a feasibility study on the Philippine National Railways' Manila-Calabarzon Express (MCX) to determine whether or not the commuter line is viable enough to merit an unsolicited proposal from the company.

The overseas investment firm last month signed a memorandum of understanding with the PNR to conduct the study free of charge, Transportation Undersecretary for Rails Wilfredo Trinidad said in a telephone interview yesterday.

"If they find out that the project is financially viable, they'll submit an unsolicited proposal," he told the INQUIRER.

Although Daewoo would spend for the study, Trinidad said this did not necessarily give it the sole right to submit a proposal for the project, which was originally planned by property giant Ayala Land.

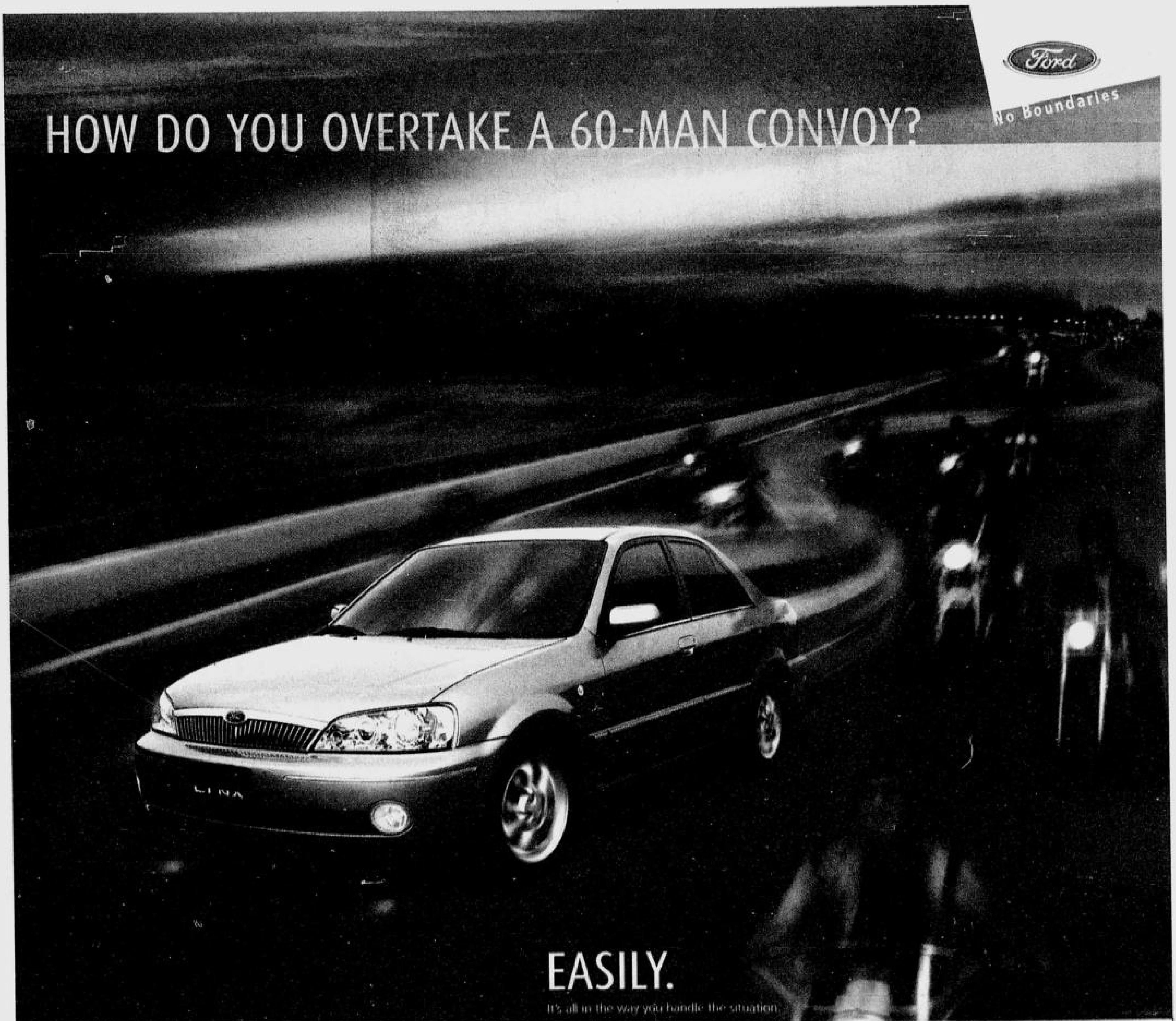
"We can't stop others from (submitting their proposals), too. There have been quite a number of interested parties, but Daewoo was the only one which actually expressed this interest formally," he added.

The National Economic and Development Authority-Investment Coordination Committee earlier gave ALI a first pass approval for its modified BOT proposal submitted sometime in 1997 or 1998, Trinidad related.

ALI's first unsolicited proposal in 1996 was a build-transfer scheme that Trinidad said the Department of Transportation and Communications rejected. The property firm then changed this to a build-transfer-operate scheme, but this was likewise junked.

"Its (modified BOT) proposal was the one that got a first pass approval from the Neda-ICC, but

DAEWOO/ B5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DOF to investigate raps against Garcia

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has started investigating charges of corruption against Government Service Insurance System general manager and president Winston Garcia.

"We will investigate him," Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said last week before he left for an International Monetary Fund meeting in Washington.

Camacho disclosed that he had received documents that prompted him to begin an investigation on Garcia.

Finance Undersecretary Inocencio Ferrer said the finance department informed Garcia of the allegations and had asked him to reply in writing.

"We told him about the urgency to reply to the serious allegations that we will not allow to be left unanswered," Ferrer said.

Garcia has maintained that his conduct as head of GSIS has been aboveboard.

There have been talks that Garcia will be replaced soon by former Justice Secretary Silvestre Bello III.

Garcia said, however, he had not been informed that he was about to be replaced.

"I serve under the pleasure of the President, and I believe I still enjoy her confidence," he said.

Garcia said the issues being raised against him were non-issues that the Kapisanan ng mga Manggagawa sa GSIS was trying to kindle.

The employees' union said Garcia obtained P3.34 million in cash advances during his first six months in office.

SEVENTY South Korean businessmen have arrived here to look for investment opportunities in southern Philippines. Philippine Tourism Authority general manager Nixon Kua (center) is shown here welcoming the delegates at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

ROGER MARGALLO

PLDT extends notes buyback to May 2

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THE PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. said yesterday that it was extending the early repurchase date for its cash tender offer on its 8.5-percent notes due 2003 and 10.625-percent notes due 2004 to May 2 from April 25.

"The extension is offered to permit holders, particularly retail investors, more time to receive a premium for tendering early and waiving their rights to withdraw tendered notes," PLDT said in a statement.

Each offer will expire on its original schedule of 5 p.m. on May 15.

Credit Suisse First Boston and Morgan Stanley will act as dealer managers for the offers.

El Niño seen cutting RP copra output by 36%

THE PHILIPPINES, the world's largest exporter of coconut oil, expects a 36-percent drop in its production of dried coconut meat, or copra, next year due to the El Niño weather pattern.

Philippine Coconut Authority Administrator Danilo Coronacion said the country's copra output—the raw material for coconut oil—could drop to 1.5 million tons next year from an estimated 2.352 million tons this year.

However, he did not give any forecast for coconut oil exports next year. Exports in 2002 are likely to be about 900,000 tons, down from 1.38 million tons last year.

Copra output in the country hit a record 2.83 million tons in 2001.

"With the projection by meteorologists of a prolonged El Niño starting in the fourth quarter (this year) to June next year, we expect a drastic decline in copra output to 1.5 million tons in 2003," Coronacion said in a telephone interview.

He said that based on government studies,.some 611,000 hectares or about 20 percent of the country's 3.1 million hectares of coconut lands might be affected by El Niño.

Local meteorologists have said they expected El Niño to be initially felt in the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, the country's main coconut growing area providing about 40 percent of annual copra output.

Some 80 percent of the local copra production is processed into coconut oil for export and the remaining 20 percent is used domestically for cooking oil and in the oleochemical business.

The government's forecast of a further drop in copra output next year due to El Niño comes as local oil millers have been complaining of tight supplies of the commodity due to slower harvests.

Industry sources said the decline in copra harvests was due to stressed trees. Coconut trees usually show stress by producing smaller or fewer nuts in the third year after two straight years of good production, they said. ***Reuters***

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On 20 March 2002, the Trade and Investment Development Corporation of the Philippines which is now also known as the Philippine Export-Import Agency or **PhilEXIM**, in partnership with the COFACE of France, one of the world leaders in trade facilitation and credit risk protection and PhilEXIM's partner in the Export Credit Insurance (ECI) Program, launched COFACE's flagship product - the "**@rating Solution**", the first world-wide insurable company rating system.

This new product ensures the creditworthiness of trading partners and therefore allows them to take advantage of the new opportunities arising from the growth of e-commerce worldwide. *@rating* is an internet- or web-based global trade debt rating system for the business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce sector. It certifies, rates and secures B2B trades online, a tool to lower the potential risks involved when companies transact with each other over the Net.

One feature of *@rating* is that it allows checking and insuring of a single transaction risk. They would have a choice to select the buyers they would want to cover, making *@rating* an attractive option.

As of the beginning of 2001, *@rating* has been launched by COFACE in 93 countries worldwide. *@rating* evolved from COFACE's Common Risk System, which contains information on 41 million companies worldwide. The System pools data from over 150 information sources (collectively grouped under the banner of *InfoAlliance*, also *COFACE* initiative), supports 7,000 credit limit decisions a day and is used by some 300 underwriters.

The *@rating* services covers three basic models, viz:

1. ***@rating Quality Label*** - where a company can request a label to vouch to its potential trading partners/suppliers its good payment reputation. The *@rating* Quality Label, which a company can display in its logo or website, is a marketing tool for companies to demonstrate their creditworthiness. In the Philippines, potential users of this service are importers. The cost of quality label is US$600 for the first year and US$300 for each succeeding year.
2. ***@rating checks and InfoAlliance (IA) Report*** - where a company (typically a Philippine exporter) can check the *rating* of individual companies with whom it is dealing. The rating can be given in four (4) positive attributes:
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The Portal Agreement forged by COFACE and PhilEXIM allows the latter to market *@rating* through its website or, alternatively, through an offline mode, the so-called "paperpack".

Another first from PhilEXIM, *@rating* is a powerful tool to assist Philippine exporters, specially the SMEs, in checking their trading partners ability and to obtain trade credit insurance cover on their transactions. What's more, *@rating* addresses some exporters' concerns about having to insure their whole turnover. Single-risk protection is now available with *@rating*.

For further details please visit our website at www.tidcorp.org.ph or our PhilEXIM MAIN OFFICE at the 4th Floor, Citibank Center, Citibank Plaza, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City; Tel. No. (632) 893-4204, Fax No. (632) 893-4852 & 893-4474 • **Contact Persons:** *On Programs for SMEs:* **Laura G. Atienza**, Vice President, Marketing I (SMEs), Tel. No. 893-4926; **Maribeth R. Banot**, Manager, Mktg. I (SMEs-Head Office), Tel. No. 893-4480; **Ma. Sylvia V. Encomienda**, Manager, Mktg. I (SMEs-Regional Offices), Tel. No. 893-4974; *On Programs for Large Enterprises:* **Rolando C. Alonzo**, Vice President, Marketing II (Large Accounts), Tel. No. 893-4758; **Melissa O. Libero**, Manager, Mktg. II (Large Accounts), Tel. No. 893-4510; **Ma. Alicia A. Ibarra**, Manager, Mktg. II (Large Accounts), Tel. No. 893-4741; *Regional Offices:* **PhilEXIM - Cebu**, Telefax No: (032) 233-0469; **PhilEXIM - Davao**, Telefax No: (082) 22222-41; **PhilEXIM - Bacolod**, Tel. No: (034) 434-2621, Telefax No: (034) 433-0250, 434-7920; **PhilEXIM - Legaspi**, Telefax No: (052) 480-6832.

MAXIMA
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email: is_joaquin@maxima.com.ph

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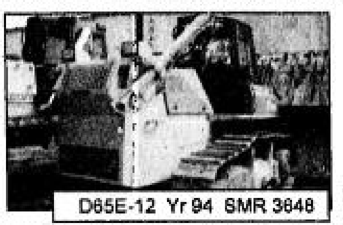

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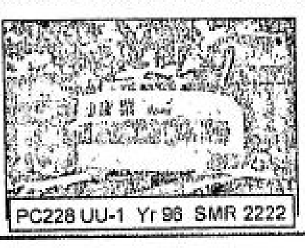
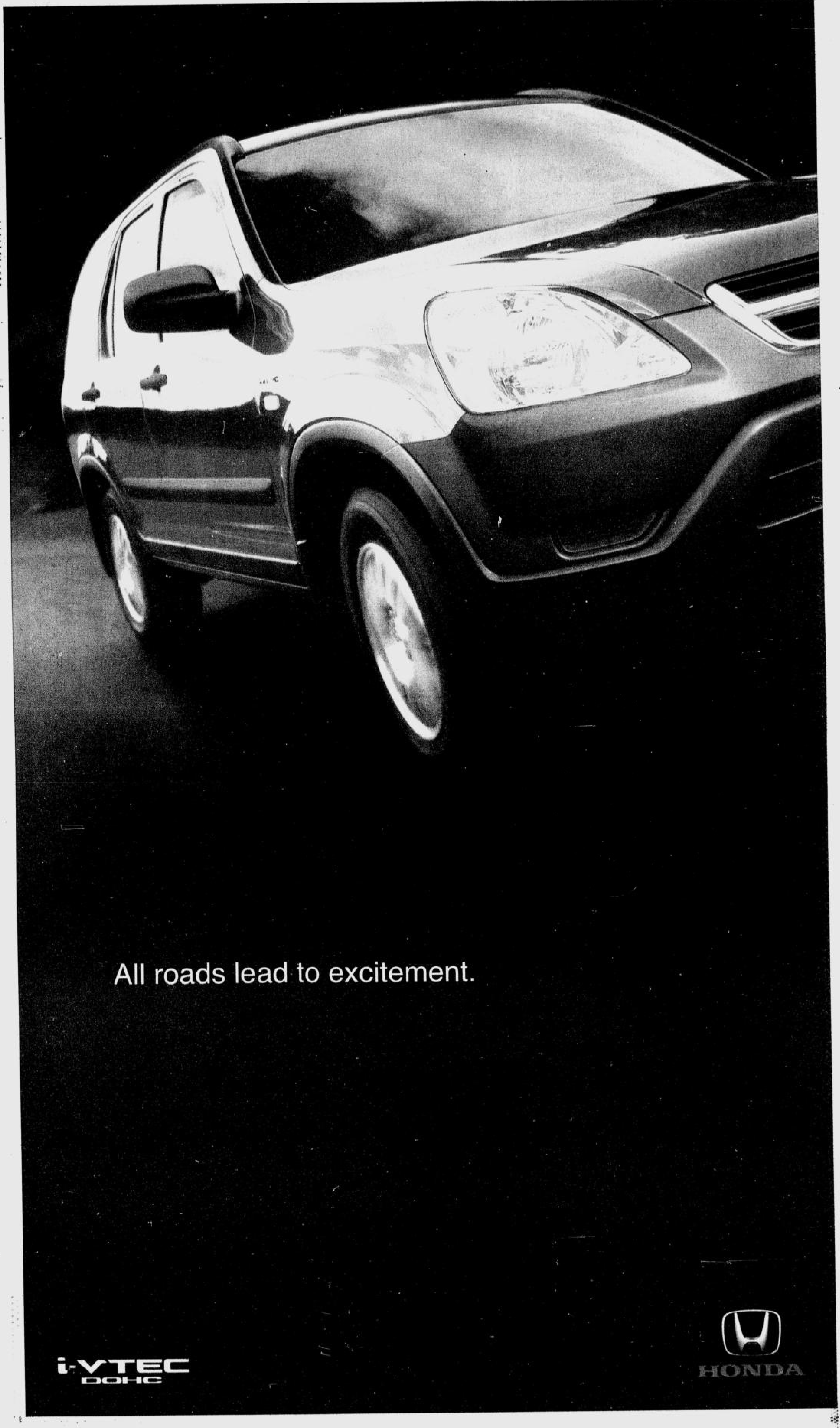
PC100-5 Yr 90 SMR 3933

KOMATSU FORKLIFTS



PC228 UU-1 Yr 96 SMR 2222

WA100-3 Yr 94 SMR 5262


All roads lead to excitement.
i-VTEC
DOHC
HONDA

1st ANNUAL PAMI AWARDS

A Tribute to Excellence

Messages

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

I send my cordial greetings to the management and staff of Philam Asset Management, Inc. on your first Annual PAMI Awards

Integrity, professionalism and excellence are the underlying values that Philam Asset Management, Inc. has resolutely espoused. I commend your management, staff, and the PAMI awardees for their continued efforts to enhance professionalism and the quality of services in the mutual fund industry.

The mutual fund industry is one among the steady revenue contributors to the national government. As movers of this vital industry, I hope your corporation will continue to actively participate in nation building.

The coming years will present daunting challenges that will test our strength as a nation. As we face the test, I am certain that all of you will continue to stand by the Filipino's side with sustained corporate vigor.

In this light, I urge you to join my administration in our determined bid to achieve social and economic progress for our people.

MABUHAY!

GMArroyo

JOSE ISIDRO CAMACHO
Secretary [illegible]
Republic [illegible]

[illegible] to the officers and staff of Philam Asset [illegible] Annual PAMI Awards to honor their most [illegible]

[illegible] gone through very turbulent times. The [illegible] from 1998 to 2000 has presented great [illegible] obstacles to the Macapagal-Arroyo [illegible] 2001 has allowed the new administration [illegible] country's finance in order. However, the [illegible] political will and competent leaders, cannot [illegible] conditions that our countrymen so greatly [illegible] national effort rest upon the private sector [illegible]

[illegible] extend my heartfelt tribute to the men [illegible] Companies for their tremendous contribution to [illegible] prosperity that we all dream of. By mobilizing savings [illegible] dreams are slowly but surely moving closer to reality.

[illegible] more power.

LILIA R. BAUTISTA
Chairperson
Securities and Exchange Commission

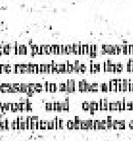
Congratulations to the 2001 Outstanding Sales Achievers of Philam Asset Management, Inc.

It is indeed an honor to be given the opportunity to recognize the people who, through hard work, have contributed immensely to the rebuilding of our economy. The asset management industry is one of the most important pillars upon which our economy stands and it is our hope that you – the achievers of the industry – will continue to strengthen this pillar through your unending search for excellence.

May you continue to serve the Filipino people by helping them make wise investment decisions, thereby improving the quality of life.

More power to all of you!

Lilia R. Bautista



JOSE L. CUISIA, JR.
President and CEO
Philamlife

The 2001 performance of the Philam Group Agency Force in promoting savings through mutual funds is truly a remarkable feat. Even more remarkable is the fact that your effort last year rendered a loud and meaningful message to all the affiliate companies—"Through genuine cooperation, teamwork and optimism, tremendous things can be accomplished, and even the most difficult obstacles can be hurdled."

With synergy as a battle cry, the Philam Group of Companies was able to achieve a distinguished performance, amidst the political and economic uncertainties faced last year. The experience of Philam Asset Management, Inc. (PAMI) is one concrete manifestation of the group's collaborative effort: a spectacular & record-breaking sales performance, the opening up of more distribution channels, an increase in the number of licensed investment representatives, and higher than benchmark yields for the funds managed by the company.

It is with great pride and honor that I recognize the members of the Philam Agency Forces who have heeded the call for teamwork and cooperation in promoting greater synergy within the Philam Group. I salute you for achieving elevated levels of success and competitiveness, by moving to provide more comprehensive and diversified financial products and services to your clients.

Congratulations to all of you! May your excellence carry on!

PHILAM ASSET MANAGEMENT, INC.

presents with great pride

The PAMI Awardees for 2001

Driven by a mission to provide high quality financial services, these outstanding men and women from the Philam Agency Forces have genuinely provided creative financial solutions aimed at meeting the diverse needs of their clients.

National Awardees

ANTONIO SANTANA
Del Mundo Associates
Top Sales Agent

ROSARIO SALIENTES
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates
Top Unit Manager

ROSARIO SALIENTES/ VERONICA GONZALEZ
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates
Top Agency Managers

Sectoral Awardees

Top Agents

ANTONIO SANTANA
Del Mundo Associates
M.M. - East

THERESITAS PANOPIO
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates
M.M. - South

WILFRED YU
Yu Associates
M.M. - Central

SUSAN ARIOLA
Capule Associates
M.M. - North

PERLA RIVERA - CPA
Rivera Agency
Cebu

[illegible]
Bobe Agency
Bacolod / Iloilo

ISABELITA VILLANUEVA
[illegible] Agency
Cagayan de Oro

CARLOS HUYATID
Huyatid Agency
Davao / Gen. Santos

Top Unit Managers

NELIA LAUDICO
Del Mundo Associates
M.M. - East

ROSARIO SALIENTES
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates
M.M. - South

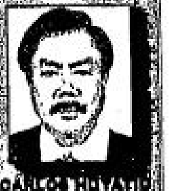
WILFRED YU
Yu Associates
M.M. - Central

LAMBERTO SALAMATIN
Capule Associates
M.M. - North

JESUS ESMA, JR.
Tan Agency
Cebu

EMILIE BOBE
Bobe Agency
Bacolod / Iloilo

EDILBERTO SUBRIA
Lumbo Agency
Cagayan de Oro



CARLOS HUYATID
Huyatid Agency
Davao / Gen. Santos

Top Agency Managers

LOURDES DEL MUNDO
Del Mundo Associates
M.M. - East

ROSARIO SALIENTES/ VERONICA GONZALEZ
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates
M.M. - South

WILFRED YU
Yu Associates
M.M. - Central

ENRICO CAPULE
Capule Associates
M.M. - North

MELBA TAN
Tan Agency
Cebu

CONCEPCION GONZAGA
Gonzaga Agency
Bacolod / Iloilo

GODOFREDO LUMBO
Lumbo Agency
Cagayan de Oro

CARLOS HUYATID
Huyatid Agency
Davao / Gen. Santos

Special Awardees

DANILO MERCADO
Top Referring Sales Counselor
PPI - Mercado Associates

FRANCIS LITTAUA
Top Referring Division
PPI - North Division

CYBELLE CUESTA
Agency Coordinator of the Year
Philamlife

The tribute will be held at the Grand Ballroom of the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel on April 25, 2002, at 6:30 in the evening.

PHILAM ASSET MANAGEMENT, INC.
5th Floor Philamlife (Salcedo) Building, 126 L.P. Leviste Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227 [illegible] No. 81[illegible]-6818;
E-Mail Address: pami.iru@aig.com; pami.sales@aig.com

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AIG Credit Card Company Philippines, Inc.
PHILAM CARE
PHILAM BANK
PHILAM PROPERTIES

Gov't, Tan to sign PNB deal tomorrow

But Senate probe may derail signing

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT and tobacco tycoon Lucio Tan are set to sign tomorrow a debt-to-equity conversion deal involving Philippine National Bank.

"We are thinking of signing on Friday. Both the government and the Lucio Tan group are ready, and the documents are all ready for execution," PNB director and former chair Norberto Nazareno said in an interview yesterday.

Nazareno, president of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., said the two parties were only awaiting a clearance from the Senate committees on finance and on government corporations and public enterprises.

These committees are investigating allegations that Tan deliberately triggered heavy withdrawals from PNB in September and October 2000 to force the government to extend P25 billion in emergency assistance to the bank.

Nazareno asked lawmakers to clear the debt-to-equity conversion plan so that an agreement could be signed tomorrow.

The government and Tan's group have agreed to convert some P7.8 billion out of the P25 billion that PNB owes the government into equity. This will raise the government's stake in PNB to 44.98 percent from 16 percent and reduce Tan's equity from 67 percent to 44.98 percent.

An agreement between the two parties was originally scheduled for signing on Jan. 20 but was set back by investigations initiated by the Department of Justice and the Senate

Sen. John Osmeña, who sought the investigation into the debt-to-equity conversion deal, said it was unlikely an agreement could be signed this week.

The earliest that the Senate could come up with its committee reports would be on Monday, he said.

"We will not pass any recommendation unless they can provide the information by Friday on whether or not Lucio Tan had triggered the bank run," he said.

He added that the Senate also needed more data regarding the transaction.

Osmeña is seeking documents relating to heavy withdrawals that hit PNB in September and October 2000.

These withdrawals forced PNB to run to the government for assistance. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, in turn, extended some P15 billion, while PDIC gave about P10 billion.

The emergency assistance came a week after Tan infused over P10 billion in new capital through a stock rights offering. The infusion increased his stake to 67 percent from a little less than 50 percent.

Metrobank to sell Global Bank, sees income hike

THE METROPOLITAN Bank and Trust Co. has entered into talks with a number of foreign and local investors to sell its publicly listed subsidiary, Global Business Bank, according to a person familiar with the matter.

"There's value to the license and the listing. We have not closed our option to sell the license and listing with (the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas') approval," a Metrobank executive told the INQUIRER.

The central bank has yet to approve Metrobank's and Global Business Bank's operational merger.

"(Global Bank) will be an operating bank that will be sold, not just the license," the bank official disclosed. "We're entertaining people who are interested in it."

In a statement, Metrobank said it expected to post a 10-percent to 15-percent annual increase in its first-quarter net income this year.

In the first quarter of last year, Metrobank posted a net income of P401.16 million.

Metrobank executive vice president Alfredo Javellana also told reporters that the bank's full-year net income should come in at P3 billion to P3.5 billion.

Although loans shrank in the first quarter against the year-ago period, there should be a 5-percent to 10-percent growth by the end of the year, he said.

Non-performing loans at the end of the first quarter should be around 12 percent, he added. *Elena R. Torrijos*

Development assistance from Japan hits ₱25.76B

OFFICIAL development assistance extended to the Philippines by Japan reached an all-time high of P25.76 billion for fiscal year 2001 ending March.

The figure represented a disbursement ratio of 103 percent from 94 percent a year earlier, the ADB said.

In a news statement yesterday, Economic Planning Secretary Dante Canlas said the country secured more ODA from Japan to "unclog bottlenecks" in the implementation of foreign-assisted development projects here.

Mitsuru Taruki, chief representative of the Japanese government's ODA lending arm, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, lauded the Macapagal administration for its "concerted efforts" to address its problem over the poor use of ODA loans.

Canlas reported that actual ODA disbursements reached 67.8 billion yen (P25.76 billion) in fiscal year 2001, higher than the disbursement target of 65.5 billion yen.

The Department of Public Works and Highways got the biggest share, or 34 percent, of the assistance lent. It exceeded its disbursement target by 32 percent.

The Light Railway Transit Authority and the National Power Corp. accounted for 16 percent and 11 percent, respectively, but were short of their targets by 18 percent and 5 percent.

The Philippines had been criticized by multilateral and bilateral donors for its poor use of ODA loans.

The National Economic and Development Authority earlier estimated that the country was able to use only 60 percent out of the total loans extended to it under the Estrada administration from 82 percent to 84 percent under the Ramos administration.

Use of gene-modified crops up 19%

THE USE of genetically modified crops increased by some 19 percent last year, as the world's farmers planted new biotechnology processed seeds at almost twice the rate they did the previous year.

This was disclosed by Noel Borlongan, government and public affairs director of Monsanto Philippines Inc., local office of the world's leading agricultural research firm.

Borlongan cited a report by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotechnology Applications, which also said there were now about 130 million acres of land worldwide planted to biotechnology processed plants.

"Biotech crops now account for 52 percent of the United States' corn, soy, cotton and canola acreage," Borlongan said citing the ISAA report.

Borlongan added that the United States grew 68 percent of the world's total biotech crop acres, or 88.4 million acres.

The Philippines imports part of its corn requirements for livestock feeds from the United States.

Borlongan said the significant increase in the global use of biotech crops had resulted in greater farm productivity and "brought several parts of the world, especially Third World countries closer to food security."

Daewoo keen on South Luzon . . .

From page B1

it later changed this proposal into something that the government did not accept," he said.

According to the new proposal, ALI would shoulder the government's part of the project—around 30 percent of the estimated P14.2-billion project cost—in exchange for the operation of the MCX.

But with the Asian financial crisis in 1997, ALI no longer seemed interested to pursue the project, Trinidad said.

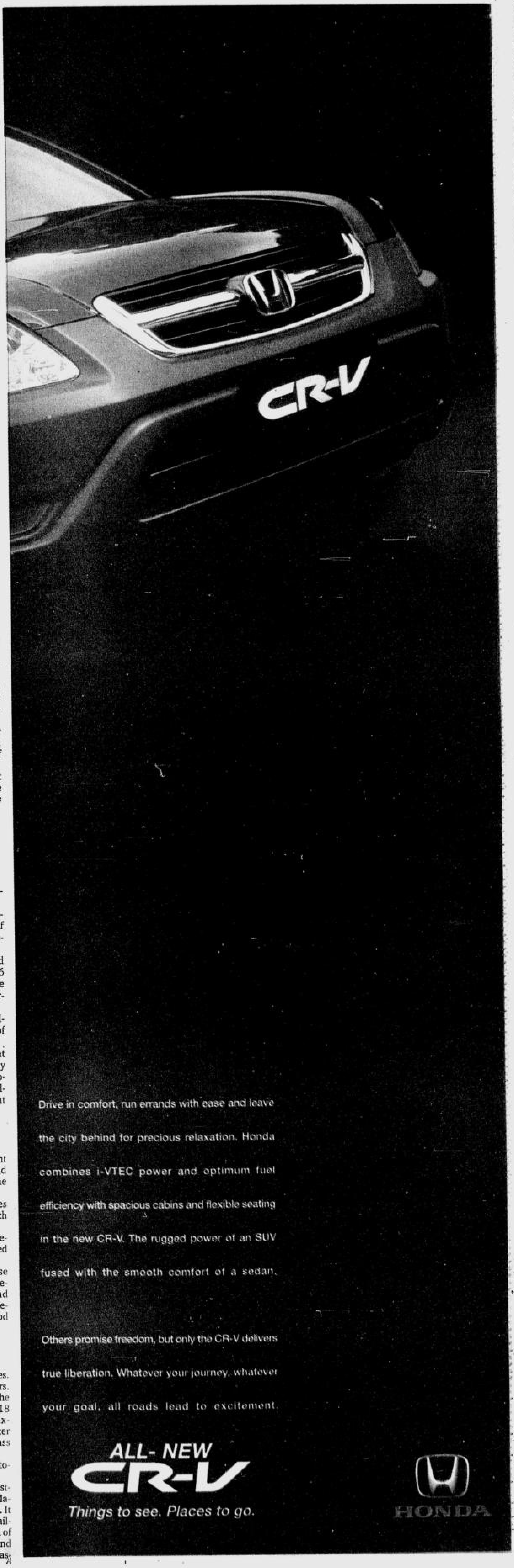
This led the Bases Conversion and Development Authority to submit its own proposal to rehabilitate the ailing railway line.

With ALI's unsolicited proponent status that came as a result of its first pass approval from the Neda-ICC, the government could not take in any other proposals from interested entities.

"But ALI didn't pursue the project for years. Neda formulated a new policy that made the validity of its first pass approval only 18 months. Since ALI's proposal already exceeded the 18 months, we wrote them a letter recently to inform them that their first pass approval had already lapsed," he said.

This effectively rejected ALI's proposal altogether, Trinidad added.

The MCX project aims to improve the existing commuter lines of the PNR in Metro Manila and extend it to the Calabarzon region. It involves the construction of a five-phase railway line, which will include the installation of signaling and communication systems, and the introduction of new locomotives and passenger coaches.



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Others promise freedom, but only the CR-V delivers true liberation. Whatever your journey, whatever your goal, all roads lead to excitement.

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Things to see. Places to go.
HONDA

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Tuesday, April 24, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	90	90	90	90	100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69.5	70	68.5	69	4,743,500
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	37	38.5	37	38.5	288,100
First E-Bank Corp.	1.72	1.78	1.72	1.74	99,000
Global Business Bank Inc.	77	77	77	77	100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	40.5	41.5	40	40	240,200
Philippine National Bank	55	56	55	56	1,400
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	29	28.5	29	2,100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	16,000
Security Bank Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	75,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	17,500
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	100,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1080	1080	1080	1080	300
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	35	35.5	35	35.5	25,200
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.63	0.63	11,110,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	800	800	795	800	15,920
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
Piltel	0.46	0.46	0.44	0.44	1,070,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	485	485	470	472.5	208,170
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.019	0.019	0.017	0.018	61,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	27.5	27.5	27	27	55,900
Manila Electric Co. B	45	45	44.5	45	965,300
Petron Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.56	1.56	5,027,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.74	1.78	1.74	1.74	720,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICE					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.75	2.75	2.65	2.7	2,941,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	36,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUC TS					
Alsons Cement Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	100,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	590,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	40,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	50,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	100,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	95,000
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	28.5	28.5	27.5	28	2,337,000
RFM Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.28	1.28	27,000
Swift Food Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	84,000
San Miguel Corp. A	46	46.5	45	46.5	92,700
San Miguel Corp. B	55.5	56	55.5	55.5	557,900
Universal Robina Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.7	30,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	130,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.44	0.44	0.41	0.41	40,000
Ayala Corp.	6.2	6.2	6	6	4,550,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.08	2.1	2.08	2.08	1,223,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	1,550,000
Apc Group Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	20,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	101,000,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.64	0.65	0.62	0.62	6,520,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	100,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	10,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	1,040,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	7,100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	100,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.2	6.7	6.7	9,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.34	1.36	1,226,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	29	29	28	28	355,400
Global Equities Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.11	1,820,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	524,000
Keppel Phil. Holdings B	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	1,000
Medco Holdings	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	20,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.83	0.84	0.82	0.83	3,060,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	700,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	3,870,000
Music Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	100,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	100,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	970,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.11	0.115	0.1	0.105	1,240,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	130,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. B	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	90,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.6	0.6	70,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	1,500,000
Pryce Corp.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	500,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.25	11.25	50,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.56	0.56	0.54	0.54	2,300,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.26	0.26	360,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	35	36	35	36	712,500
DMCI Holdings Inc.- Pref	770	770	770	770	200
Equitable PCI Bank-War	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	10,000
Jollibee Warrants	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	3,900
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	15,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	800
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series As	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.1	7.2	7	7	9,345,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	500,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	550,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	750,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.46	2.65	2.44	2.5	19,366,000
Highlands Prime Leisure	2.1	2.14	2.08	2.14	2,150,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	320,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	1,700,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc. S	6.3	6.4 6	.3 6	0.3	11,200,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	1,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	20,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines, Inc.	0.042	0.043	0.04	0.04	14,300,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.195	0.2	0.195	0.2	820,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	220,000
Omico Corp.	0.0042	0.0044	0.0042	0.0044	11,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	50,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.27	0.27	0.25	0.25	1,470,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	400,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0046	0.0046	0.0044	0.0044	25,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	5,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.055	0.06	0.055	0.06	200,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	10,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	500,000

DISCLOSURES

LA TONDEÑA Distillers Inc. repurchased 400,000 of its shares at P27.50 per share. Also, the company will be holding its investors' briefing on April 26, 10:30 a.m. at the 2/F Magellan's Gallery, San Miguel Properties Center, Mandaluyong City.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **First Metro Investment Corp.** were Antonio Abacan Jr., Mary Ty, Felipe Alfonso, Francisco Sebastian, Francisco Co, Solomon Cua, Martin Dy Buncio, Florencio Mallare, Menardo Jimenez, Jerry Angping and Edgardo Marquez.

* * *

A. BROWN Co. Inc. announced the appointment of Jasmin Castro as assistant corporate secretary. The company also set April 30 as record date for its June 28 annual stockholders' meeting.

* * *

ASIAN Terminals Inc. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from May 16 to May 15.

* * *

BANKARD Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 30, 2 p.m. at the 5/F St. La Salle Hall, Tower II of RCBC Plaza, Makati City. Stockholders as of April 30 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

STENIEL Manufacturing Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 17, 2 p.m. at the boardroom of Steniel Cavite Packaging Corp. Only stockholders as of March 27 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

SOUTHEAST Asia Cement Holdings Inc. announced the resignation of Maria Angeles as corporate secretary. Appointed to replace her was Arsenio Cabrera Jr. while Rose Marie King was appointed assistant corporate secretary. Also, the company's annual stockholders' meeting will be on June 26, 9 a.m. at the Peninsula Manila. Stockholders as of May 27 shall be entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

HIGHLANDS Prime Leisure Properties Inc. shortened its name to Highlands Prime Inc.

* * *

San Miguel Corp. will hold its investors' briefing on April 26, 2 p.m. at the 2/F Magellan's Gallery, SMPI Center, Mandaluyong City.

* * *

UNION Bank of the Philippines will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 24, 4 p.m. at the Manila A & B of Shangri-La Makati. Only stockholders as of April 10 are entitled to attend the meeting. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

Meralco posts P72.8-M loss

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MANILA Electric Co. yesterday reported a net loss of P72.8 million for the first quarter, a wide swing from a net income of P394.4 million for the same period last year.

The power distribution giant blamed the loss on the abrupt decline in sales volume and the higher systems loss from January to March.

Total sales volume dropped by 6.3 percent from 5,343 million kilowatt-hours in the first quarter of 2001 to 5,006 million kwh in 2002. Systems loss went up to P908 million this year from P386 million last year.

Meralco also said its operating revenues for the quarter decreased by 7.4 percent from P31.5 billion in 2001 to P29.1 billion in 2000.

The firm said this was due to the drop in sales volume and its inability to implement a rate increase.

"The petition for a rate increase (of 30 centavos per kwh) filed on April 14, 2000, is still pending with the Energy Regulatory Commission," Meralco said.

But the ERC had earlier said that the petition has become moot because of Meralco's proposed unbundled rates.

Meralco's unbundled rates petition, if approved as submitted, would mean a rate increase of 55 centavos per kwh for residential consumers.

In a related development, Meralco said in another statement it spent at least P1.09 billion for its electrical system projects in the first quarter this year.

Elpi Cuna, Meralco director for corporate communications, said in a statement that the investment was part of the continuous effort to upgrade Meralco's electric system.

The projects were a P28.8-million, 34.5-kilovolt facility that feeds electricity to some Meralco customers in the airport complex in Pasay City; the splitting of the 115-kv Marikina-Masinag-Parang line into the Marikina-Masinag and Marikina-Parang section, costing P69.2 million, and the installation of a P7.1-million, 13.8-kv capacitor bank at the firm's Balintawak substation.

CURRENCIES

April 24, 2002

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.124353	1.000000	50.9660
Japan	Yen	0.008644	0.007688	0.3918
United Kingdom	Pound	1.627727	1.447700	73.7835
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.144165	0.128220	6.5349
Switzerland	Franc	0.681757	0.606355	30.9035
Canada	Dollar	0.714420	0.635405	32.3841
Singapore	Dollar	0.618286	0.549904	28.0264
Australia	Dollar	0.605468	0.538503	27.4453
Bahrain	Dinar	2.982529	2.652661	135.1955
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.299820	0.266660	13.5906
Brunei	Dollar	0.617438	0.549149	27.9879
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000119	0.000106	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.025973	0.023100	1.1773
UAE	Dirham	0.306130	0.272272	13.8766
Korea	Won	0.000867	0.000771	0.0393
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.889400	45.3292
Brazil	Real	0.479673	0.426621	21.7432
Denmark	Kroner	0.134468	0.119596	6.0953
India	Rupee	0.022989	0.020446	1.0421
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.295883	0.263158	13.4121
Mexico	New Peso	0.121526	0.108085	5.5087
New Zealand	Dollar	0.502145	0.446608	22.7618
Norway	Kroner	0.131536	0.116988	5.9624
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018770	0.016694	0.8508
South Africa	Rand	0.102915	0.091533	4.6651
Sweden	Kroner	0.108859	0.096819	4.9345
Syria	Pound	0.025553	0.022727	1.1583
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.032393	0.028810	1.4683
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001315	0.001170	0.0596

La Tondeña allots $500M to buy allied ventures

By Doris C. Dumlao

LA TONDEÑA Distillers Inc., the hard liquor unit of San Miguel Corp., is willing to spend up to $500 million for acquisitions, with the first deal expected to be closed within the next six months.

In a briefing after the LTDI stockholders' meeting yesterday, SMC chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco also said that as part of LTDI's expansion binge, a P200-million plant that would produce cassava starch milk, an alternative raw material for the production of alcohol, was being constructed in Bago, Negros Occidental

He said the new starch plant, which could produce 300 tons a year for LTDI subsidiary Distileria Bago Inc., would begin operation by the latter part of the year or early next year.

SMC president Ramon Ang said LTDI was currently working on a domestic acquisition: a local company engaged in the hard liquor business, which he did not identify.

"We're also looking at several regional acquisitions within the next couple of months," Ang said.

Ang, who estimated the $500-million budget for LTDI's new acquisitions, said this could be separated from the earlier announced $1-billion acquisition budget for parent firm SMC.

At present, LTDI has a cash reserve of about P3.3 billion, but Ang said it was possible to "use some leverage" to fund future acquisitions.

During the stockholders' meeting, Cojuangco also disclosed a six-pronged strategy to boost the business of LTDI, in view of the foregone opportunities arising from the transfer of $141 million worth of non-liquor businesses to affiliate Coca Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. last year.

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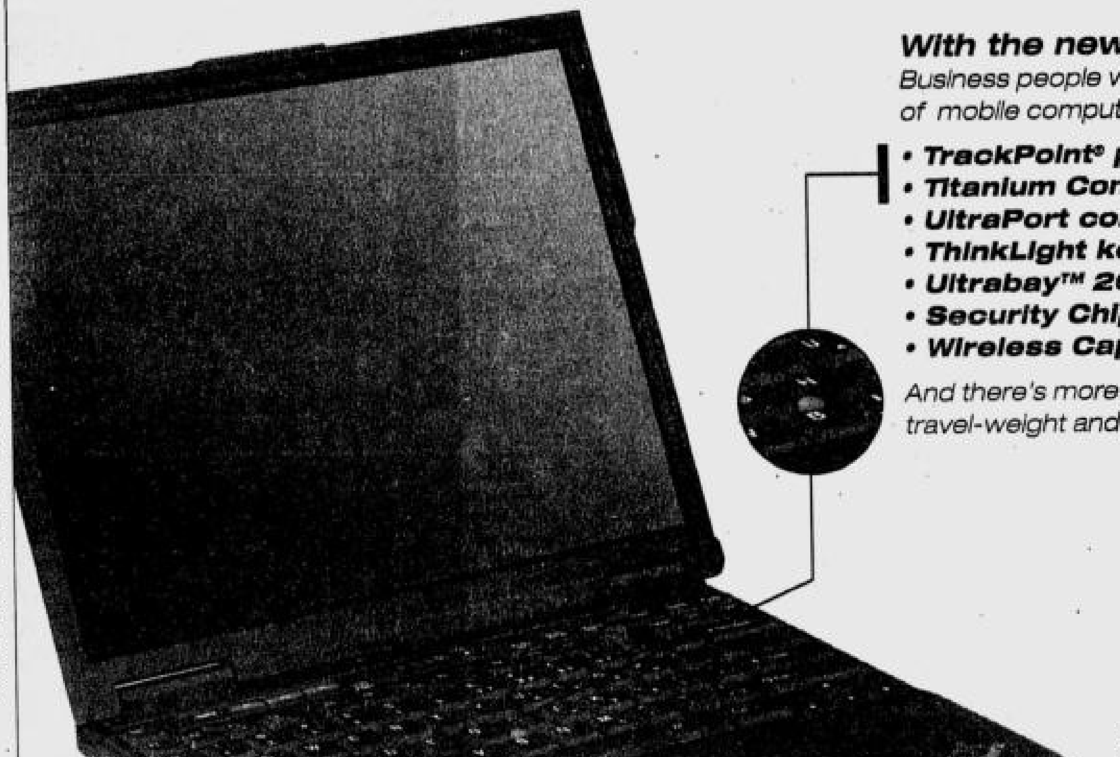

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Asian leaders look to cut export dependence

NEW YORK—As Asia's boom-or-bust nations stir from an economic slump, helped by a US-led global recovery, finance officials said on Tuesday they planned to cut their heavy dependence on exports to help stabilize their economies.

But solid recovery will be difficult if Japan, the world's second-largest economy, which accounts for 60 percent of Asia's output, fails to make headway in restructuring its economy, Asian officials say.

With the chilling memories of the 1997 financial crisis still fresh, finance ministers and central bankers from five Asian nations attending a conference here warmly embraced increased regional economic cooperation and stronger domestic consumer spending as ways to inoculate their economies from export-led downturns.

"While East Asia will continue to be trade-dependent, they will continue to be vulnerable to external developments," said Zeti Akhtar Aziz, head of Malaysia's central bank.

With saving rates high—far above 30 percent of national output in most Asian countries—Aziz told the Asia Society conference: "The potential exists for increased consumer spending, thereby bolstering the domestic economies."

The Philippines was oft cited by participants as an example of how consumer spending and structural reforms could bolster growth. In an interview with Reuters, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said despite a 15-percent drop in gross exports in 2001, his nation's economy grew by 3.4 percent last year.

Likewise, South Korea, long perceived as an export powerhouse, over the last year has achieved growth despite slowing exports thanks to surprising resilience in consumer demand.

Other methods finance officials proposed to strengthen their economies included streamlining banking systems, making corporate and financial information more readily available and bringing down trade barriers.

"Globalism leaves Asian countries even more vulnerable to the increasing dynamism in the world," said Xiang Huaicheng, China's finance minister.

"Regional cooperation for Asia offers practical solutions and logical choices," said Xiang, who added that China is committed to promoting regional cooperation and keeping its exchange rates stable while it stimulates domestic demand.

Reuters

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the Special Seminar on:

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scheduled for May 3 and 4, 2002 at Dusit Hotel, Makati City, HAS BEEN RESET TO JUNE 28 AND 29, 2002, AT THE SAME VENUE AND WITH THE SAME TIME SCHEDULE.

All those who have already registered or made reservations are advised accordingly, and all those interested in participating therein -- OWNERS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (PATENTS, TRADEMARKS AND COPYRIGHTS), INCLUDING MANUFACTURERS / DISTRIBUTORS OF PRODUCTS WITH BRAND NAMES, I.T. COMPANIES AND PROFESSIONALS ESPECIALLY SOFTWARE AND WEB DEVELOPERS, MEMBERS OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, ESPECIALLY FILM AND CD PRODUCERS AND PERFORMING / RECORDING ARTISTS -- AS WELL AS CORPORATE & PRACTISING LAWYERS, are urged to register early to assure themselves of participation, and at the same time, enjoy a registration discount.

For further information about the seminar, please contact Mrs. Beth Guerrero, Atty. Bunny Beltran and Ms. Donna Mendoza at Tel. Nos. 724-0595, 725-1481, 721-3452, 721-3470 Telefax No. 722-0432
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Emerging market leaders wary over new G7 debt crisis plan

NEW YORK—A new debt plan to handle fiscal meltdowns has drawn wary responses on Tuesday from the very emerging markets they aim to help, as Turkey and Mexico call for flexibility for nations to choose their own solutions.

In the midst of Argentina's ever-deepening financial collapse, the Group of Seven leading industrial countries this weekend drew up a broad plan to combat financial crises in emerging markets.

Emerging market officials, however, cautioned that such plans should be flexible and apply to developing countries as a whole, not be targeted at countries that had already gone over the brink.

"We need a system that's good for the majority, not for one or two crisis cases," said Turkish Economy Minister Kemal Dervis at an international investors' conference in New York.

Mexican Central Bank Governor Guillermo Ortiz also urged flexibility in applying such plans, saying that, in many cases, countries needed financial help but not a full-scale restructuring of their debts.

"Going toward an overly rigid framework would be counter productive," said Ortiz, speaking on the sidelines of the same conference. "We have to really emphasize the issue of crisis prevention."

The talk of crisis management comes on the heels of Argentina's disastrous default and devaluation earlier this year and a financial crisis in Turkey in 2001.

Argentina's catastrophe has gone full-throttle in recent days as officials shut down the banking system to avoid a massive hemorrhaging of the financial system. To add to the woes, Argentine Economy Minister Jorge Remes Lenicov resigned on Tuesday.

While most experts have been quick to say the fallout from Argentina on emerging markets has been limited, they have also expressed concern that Argentina's meltdown—and Turkey's financial crisis in 2001—will keep a lid on capital flows to emerging markets in the future.

Under the G7 plan, emerging market countries' agreements to borrow money would include debt restructuring provisions that would clarify what would happen if payment problems arose. They also said the provisions to be included in contracts should allow creditors to make decisions by super-majority. **Reuters**

Andersen's turnaround ace lays out restructuring plan

HOUSTON—A turnaround specialist hired by besieged accountant Andersen proposes slimming down the firm to keep it out of bankruptcy, according to documents made public on Tuesday, while the auditing firm's lawyers readied for a criminal case that could determine its future.

Bryan Marsal, a founding partner of turnaround firm Alvarez & Marsal, wrote in an affidavit made public on Tuesday that his plan for Chicago-based Andersen aims only to slim the firm down to a sustainable level.

"Andersen is not in dissolution or liquidation. On the contrary, every effort is being made to restructure the firm, achieving the most value for its unneeded assets, and to preserve value for Andersen's continuing businesses, its creditors, its partners and employees," wrote Marsal, who was hired by Andersen late last month.

Marsal's six-page affidavit, dated April 16, was included in court papers filed by Andersen, which is trying to beat back a request by plaintiffs who have asked the court to block the firm's sale of its various units. Andersen is a key defendant in a suit filed by angry shareholders of Enron Corp.

The class-action suit blames Andersen, top Enron insiders, and the energy trader's bankers and lawyers for contributing to the Houston firm's disastrous collapse into the largest-ever US bankruptcy.

Marsal's plan for steering Andersen through the rocky shoals ahead outlines a broad structure but is short on details. He describes his assignment as examining Andersen's current and evolving operating costs and determining "the most beneficial ways in which Andersen LLP can downsize its firm in line with its expected ongoing professional activities."

Reuters

Japan PC market in worst slump in 23 years last year

TOKYO—Japan's personal computer market saw its worst slump in 23 years in the 2001/02 business year, hit by sluggish consumer spending and restrained corporate investment in information technology, industry data showed on Wednesday.

Domestic PC shipments in the year that ended March 31 fell 12 percent to 10.68 million units, the first fall in four years, the Japan Electronics and Information Technology Industries Association (JEITA) said.

It was the biggest year-on-year drop since the association started gathering data in 1978, an association spokesperson said.

Total shipments including exports fell 12 percent to 11.36 million.

Highlighting continued weakness in the market, domestic PC shipments fell 16 percent in the January-March quarter from a year earlier to 3.09 million units, JEITA said.

The figures contrasted with more buoyant numbers for the US and global PC markets released last week by market researcher International Data Corp that showed US unit sales dropped 0.4 percent and worldwide sales 2.7 percent during the quarter.

The association said, however, that it expected a 4-percent rebound in domestic shipments to 11.1 million units in the business year that started on April 1.

"The prediction is based on an expected spread of broadband and other infrastructure, increasing replacement demand for business-use PCs, a rising number of senior and beginner consumer users and so on," an association spokesperson said.

Reuters

Wireless firms report solid results

CHICAGO—Wireless telephone companies reported solid results on Tuesday as healthy subscriber growth and strong operating cash flow were taken as signs that the industry was holding up well in the face of the economic slowdown and increasing price competition.

The wireless sector has become a rare bright spot in the otherwise dismal telecoms sector. However, analysts said the broader telecoms gloom may eventually hamstring the sector.

"The difficulties that the wireline guys are having will flow into the wireless guys," Frank Marsala, wireless analyst with Robertson Stephens, said.

AT&T Wireless Services Inc. and VoiceStream Wireless, the third and sixth-largest national wireless operators respectively, reported higher-than-expected net new customers and operating profit. VoiceStream is a unit of Deutsche Telekom AG.

Verizon Wireless, the nation's No. 1 wireless operator, reported a shortfall in net new customers. But analysts said they were still happy with its overall results, especially operating cash flow which handily beat estimates.

"When you look at these numbers, it's really reassuring that wireless carriers are seeing better-than-expected demand. Things have really picked up on a monthly basis, margins are expanding with (capital expenditure) coming down," Thomas Lee, wireless analyst with J.P. Morgan, said.

Reuters

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ADB: Asia on its way out of unexpectedly bad year

DEVASTATED by natural disasters and caught in the middle of the war on terror, Asia's economy took a beating in 2001, the Asian Development Bank said in its annual report Thursday.

The report stressed that, although the region is expected to rebound in the months ahead, last year was unexpectedly tough. India and Turkmenistan were hit with earthquakes. A severe winter gripped Mongolia.

Already poor Afghanistan was further ravaged by the war on terrorism.

That all translated into dismal economic figures—with the growth of developing Asian nations slowing to half that of the year before, largely because of decreased demand.

"Exports, tourism and foreign investment fell," the report said. "It was a year of slow and uneven growth worldwide, a year when the external economic environment challenged many of the ADB's developing member countries at every turn."

The 60-member Asian Development Bank, created in 1966 to help reduce poverty in Asia, approved $5.3 billion in loans throughout the region and more than $145.4 million in technical assistance projects last year, the report said.

The Manila-based bank also approved grants for 16 projects worth $93.8 million and three equity investments for a total of $30.4 million.

It provided additional assistance to Afghanistan, Pakistan and the central Asian countries affected by the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terror attacks on the United States.

Other areas noted in the report included:

- East Timor, which recently gained independence from Indonesia, saw economic recovery last year in tandem with the restoration of order and security. But while its gross domestic product grew by an estimated 18 percent, it remains heavily dependent on external funding.
- China was a bright spot in 2001, it said, with GDP growing by an estimated 7.3 percent. But the global economic slowdown was felt strongly in exports, which grew only 6.8 percent, compared with 27.9 percent in 2000.
- The Philippines saw growth decelerate from 4 percent in 2000 to 3.4 percent last year, in large part due to domestic political disruptions. Unemployment was down slightly to 11.1 percent, from 11.2 the year before.

Despite the difficulties last year, the bank earlier this month forecast a better year lies ahead for the region. *AP*

China to open up $1.5-T trade market

KUALA LUMPUR—Vice President Hu Jintao allayed fears Wednesday over China's rising economic might, saying the country would open up trade opportunities worth at least $1.5 trillion in the next five years.

Hu, widely tipped to be China's next leader, urged Asia not to view China as a competitor following its entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) but as a "positive force" to forge an economically stronger and stable region.

"Now that China is in the WTO, it will surely provide a much broader market and many more abundant business opportunities to the rest of Asia.

"In the next five years, a more open China will provide its trading partners with opportunities of at least $1.5 trillion worth of goods," he said in a special address at a public forum here.

"As China accelerates the implementation of its 'go global' strategy, it will increase its investment in other Asian countries."

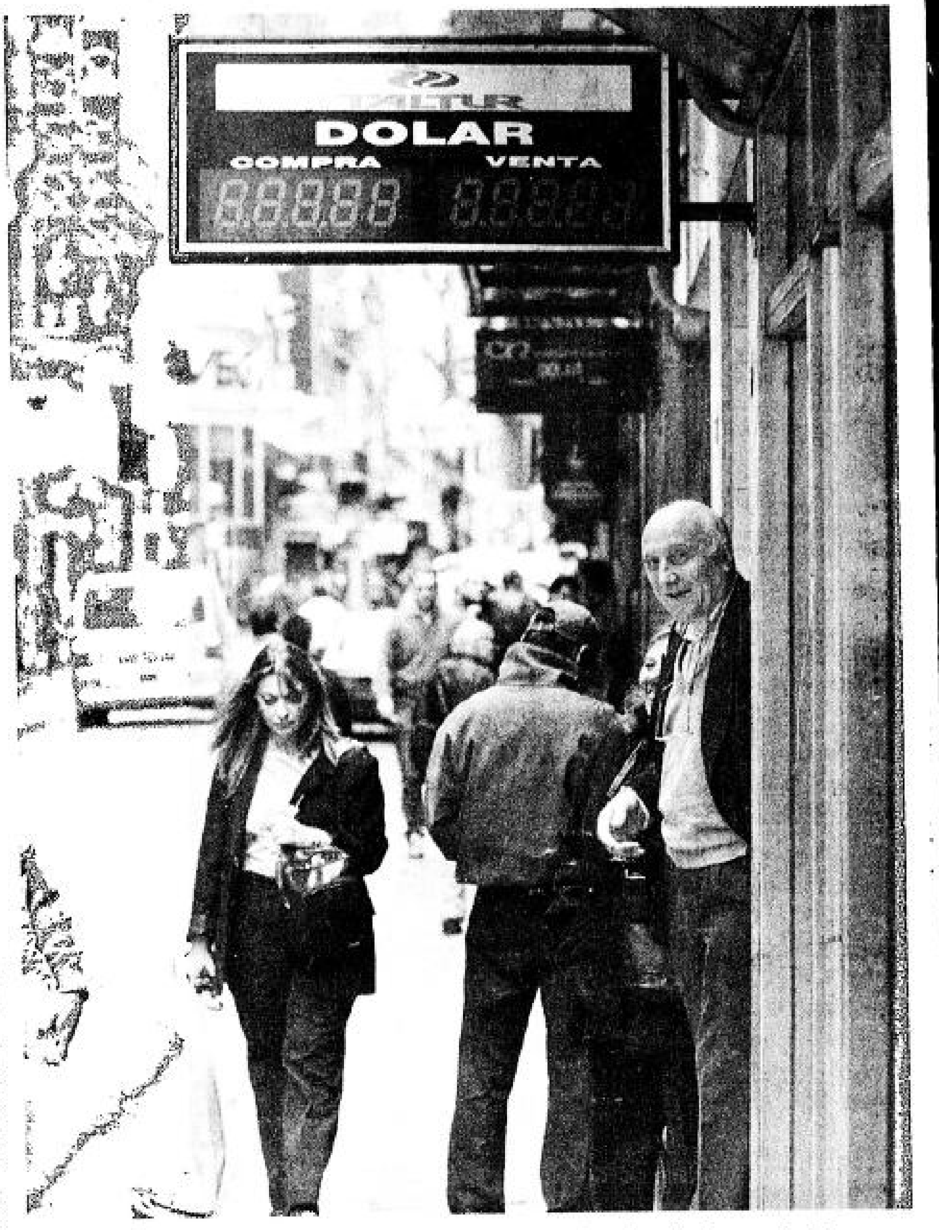
Hu, accompanied by a 65-member delegation, arrived here Tuesday for a four-day visit in the first leg of a three-nation tour that will also take him to the United States.

Hu urged the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to play a bigger role to deepen cooperation in Asia, which now contributes 30 percent of world trade.

He noted that Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's proposed "East Asia Economic Caucus" has now been realized with cooperation between Asean plus China, South Korea and Japan.

China and Asean last year also agreed to set up a free trade zone within 10 years.

Trade between China and Asean continued to grow at an average annual growth of over 20 percent, surging to $41.6 billion last year, from only $8 billion in 1991, he said. *AFP*



PEDESTRIANS pass under shut off electronic boards of exchanging houses in the financial district of Buenos Aires Tuesday, April 23, as all foreign exchange and banking transactions remained indefinitely halted until the government draws up an economic plan to stem the outflow of about $100 million a day from the banks. The program will aim to end thousands of successful lawsuits contesting the partial banking freeze imposed by government. AP

US consumers felt more of a pinch in 2001 than originally thought

WASHINGTON—US residents felt more of a pinch from last year's recession than previously thought, with incomes rising more slowly than estimated earlier, according to government data released on Tuesday.

The Commerce Department said US personal income rose 3.7 percent last year, a good bit less than the 4.9-percent increase reported last month.

On a per-person basis, the gain was just 2.7 percent, a sharp slowdown from the 5.8 percent rise in 2000 and the smallest increase since the last recession in 1990-91. Still, it was enough to keep consumers ahead of prices, which rose 1.6 percent.

Some economists said the revised figures could mean the recession, which many have called among the mildest on record, was somewhat deeper than it appeared at first glance.

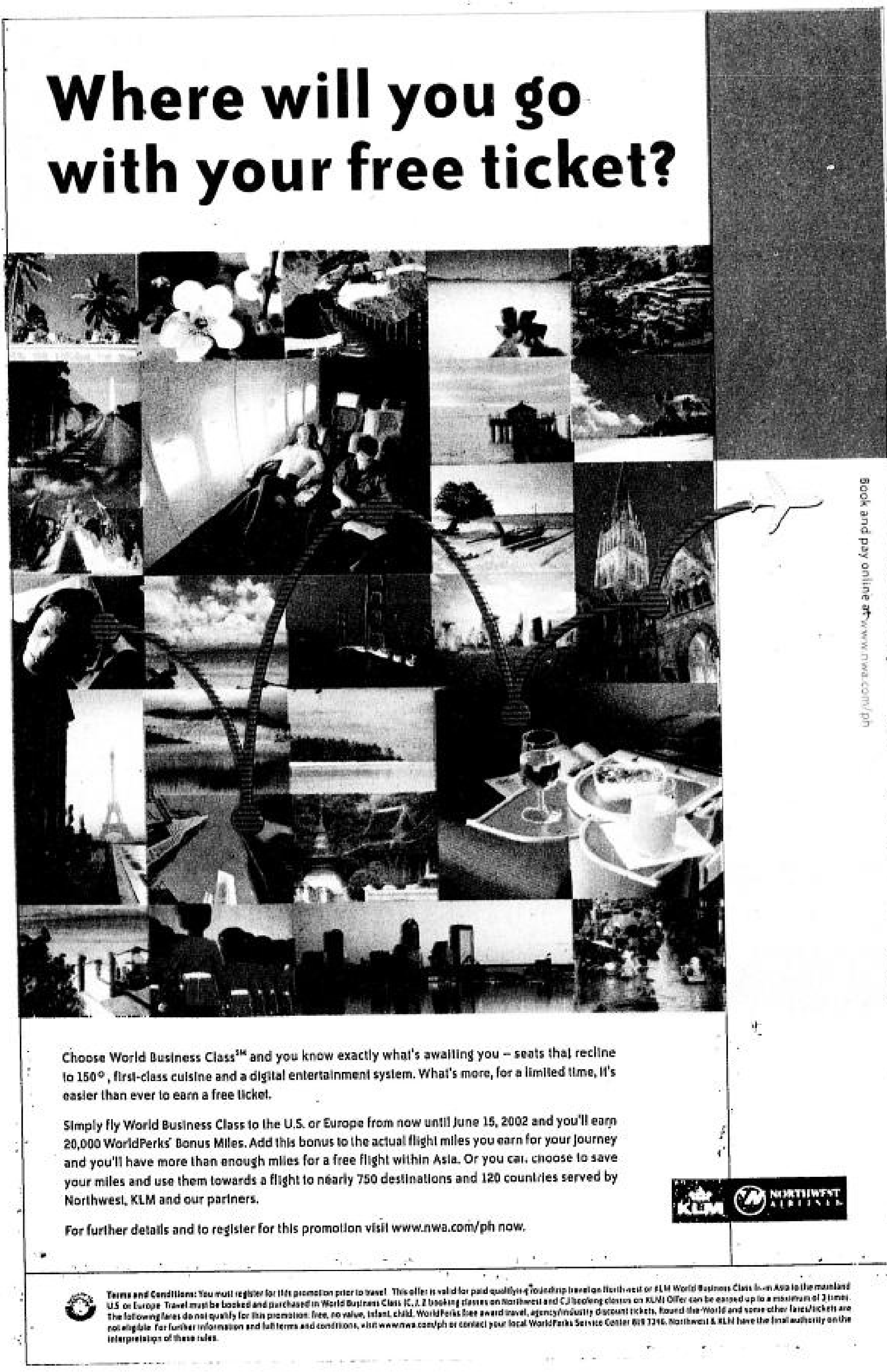
"This would make it more likely than not," Bill Dudley, chief economist at Goldman, Sachs & Co. in New York, said of the possibility the 1.2 percent advance in gross domestic product reported for last year would be revised downward.

"It would not at all surprise me at the end of the day if the recession did not turn out to be as mild as we thought originally," he said.

But the department cautioned against reading too much into the numbers, saying a lot more data will be collected by the time annual revisions to gross domestic product are released in July. It also warned that its two basic economic yardsticks—income and product—often differ.

"Over time they move pretty much the same, but for any particular quarter of the year . . . the point estimates differ quite a bit," said Steve Landefeld, director of the Bureau of Economic Analysis, which assembles the quarterly GDP report.

"It has to be factored into the many other things that have to be revised," he said of the income revisions. *Reuters*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Amazon net loss shrinks, sales up

SEATTLE—Amazon.com Inc. on Tuesday posted a smaller first-quarter net loss and beat Wall Street expectations as the online megastore's sales rose a better than-anticipated 21 percent.

Sliding back into the red after a surprise profit its previous, busy holiday shopping quarter, Amazon reported a net loss of $23 million, or 6 cents a share, compared to a net loss of $234 million or 66 cents a share a year earlier.

Revenues in the first quarter grew 21 percent to $847 million from $700 million a year earlier. Analysts had expected revenue of about $805 million, according to Wall Street tracking firm Thomson Financial/First Call.

Shares in the Seattle company rose nearly 8 percent in after-hours trading to $15.15 after the financial results were announced. In regular Nasdaq trade the stock fell 1.8 percent to close at $14.06 on Tuesday.

On the pro forma basis watched by Wall Street analysts as a gauge of the company's core retail business, Amazon said it lost $5 million, or 1 cent a share, compared to expectations of a loss between 7 and 12 cents per share.

That is smaller than the net loss of $23 million because it excludes stock-based compensation—a non-cash cost that has risen along with Amazon's share price—and changes in the market value of its euro-denominated debt.

"Overall it was definitely a strong quarter for them," said Dan Geiman, an analyst with brokerage McAdams Wright Ragen who has a "hold" rating on the stock.

The retailer also raised it guidance for its current, second quarter, saying it expected sales of $765 million to $815 million, up as much as 22 percent over a year earlier and better than analysts' forecasts of about $750 million.

Amazon also said it expected to show a pro forma operating profit of $5 million to $15 million for the second quarter. It did not forecast a net profit or loss, but the company lost 16 cents a share in the second quarter of 2001.

For the full year, Amazon forecast sales would grow by more than 15 percent, with pro forma operating income of more than $100 million.

"We are ahead of schedule financially," chief financial officer Warren Jenson said in a statement.

The solid results meant the company would cut prices, offering 30 percent off books of $15 or more, Amazon said. Previously, the discount only affected books over $20.

"That they are still able to lower prices, it is almost a Wal-Mart-like strategy in being price aggressive and still able to make a profit," said Deutsche Bank Alex. Browne analyst Jeetil Patel, who rates the stock a "buy."

"The company is (operationally) profitable, is scaling rapidly, and passing the savings back to customers, but what's next is to continue to generate significant unit growth and continue to expand globally," Patel said.

Amazon also said it had improved its results on several pro forma metrics that exclude various costs like amortization of goodwill and restructuring charges.

Pro forma operating profits were $25 million, compared a loss of $49 million a year earlier, and beating Amazon's own guidance for a loss of between $16 million and break even. *Reuters*

Japan's J-Phone to delay 3G service

TOKYO—Japanese mobile phone operator J-Phone Co. Ltd., owned by Britain's Vodafone will delay the launch of a third generation (3G) service due to technical problems and slack demand, a report said Wednesday.

Delays in handset development because of the late arrival of a global standard forced J-Phone to put the launch date back to December from June, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun newspaper said.

Another factor was weak demand for the 3G service, first started by industry leader NTT DoCoMo Inc., the economic daily said without naming sources.

3G phones give users high-speed Internet access and also enable people to download top-quality video footage and music clippings.

J-Phone said in January it would launch 3G services in June in and around Tokyo with plans to expand the network nationwide by October.

But under a revised plan, the company would only begin trial services in the Tokyo area in June by leasing 2,000 handsets with high sound quality, data communications and international roaming, the Nihon Keizai said.

The service would spread into major regional cities in December although the transmission of moving images and videophone services were unlikely to be available for the time being, it said.

J-Phone declined to make an immediate comment on the report but president Darryl Green was to hold a news conference later Wednesday.

J-Phone is the mobile phone arm of Japan Telecom Co. Ltd.—the nation's third largest carrier, which is also majority-controlled by its giant British counterpart.

It is the last of Japan's Top 3 mobile phone firms to offer 3G. DoCoMo launched the service last October, and No. 2 telecom KDDI Corp. followed suit in April. *AFP*

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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Nuestra-Damus Pawnshop Makati City Auction Sale on **May 6, 2002** all unredeemed pledges during the month of December 1-31, 2001. Nuestra Br. II Pio-9:30am; Nuestra Br. I-10:30am; Damus Pasong Tamo-12:30pm; Nuestra Main JP-1:30pm; Nuestra Br. IX Zapote 3:00pm.
Sons of J. Lanuza
Auctioneer

NUESTRA-DIAJADE PAWNSHOP LAS PINAS METRO MANILA Will have its auction sale on **May 7, 2002.** All unredeemed pledges during the month of December 1-31, 2001. Diajade Main-9:30am; Diajade Br. II 10:30am; Nuestra Br. III-11:30am; Diajade Br. I-1:00pm; Nuestra Alamanza 2:00pm.
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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late PIO PERMEJO was extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc No. 1314163; Page No. 73; Book No. 14 Series of 2002 before Notary Public Atty Rafael Candelaria Jr. of Mandaluyong City
(PDI-April 18, 25 & May 2, 2002)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late MARIO M. LACSON has been extrajudicially settled per Doc. 191, Page 40, Book IX, Series 2002 of Notary Public Cesar D. Amoranto of Pasig City
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PETITION FOR CHANGE OF FIRST NAME

I, Evelyn Oliva Emperado, 52 years old and a resident of 746 Jagobiao, Mandaue City after having been duly sworn to in accordance to law hereby declare that:

I am the petitioner seeking the Change of First Name in the/my Certificate of Live Birth, Evelyn Oliva Emperado. That was born on September 14, 1949 in Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines and is recorded under registry number 899-49.

The first name to be changed is from BELEN to Evelyn. The reason for filing this petition is that I/he/she has been habitually and continuously using Evelyn and I am publicly known in the community with that first name and all my school and employment bears the name Evelyn Oliva.

That I have not filed any similar petition and that to the best of my knowledge, no other similar petition is pending with LCRO, Court of Philippine Consulate. I have no pending criminal, civil or administrative case in any court or any quasi-judicial body.

That am filing this petition at the LCRO of Cebu City in accordance with R.A. No. 9048 and its implementing rules and regulations.

(Sgd.) Evelyn O. Emperado
Petitioner

(PDI–April 18 & 25, 2002)

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Republika ng Pilipinas
KAGAWARAN NG KAGALINGANG PANLIPUNAN AT PAGPAPAUNLAD
(DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT)
BATASAN PAMBANSA COMPLEX, CONSTITUTION HILLS
QUEZON CITY

Invitation for Bids

IFB NO. ECD-PMO/02-DSWD-001

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of the Early Childhood Development Project (Loan No. ADB-ADF 1607 PHI). It is intended that part of the proceeds of the loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for the Supply and Delivery of ECD Resource Center supplies and materials, and story books for Grade I pupils.

Package No.	Item
	A. ECD Resource Center Supplies & Materials
01	Children Story Books for age 1-2 years
02	Children Story Books for age 3-4 years
03	Children Story Books for age 5-6 years
04	Children Songs on CDs for ages 1 and above;
05	Children Stories on VCDs for ages 2 and above
	B. Storybooks for Grade I Pupils

2. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders from member countries of ADB for the supply of the Goods for the purposes of the Project.
3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and secure the complete bidding documents, upon presentation of a letter of intent, from **2 to 11 May 2002** from Ms. Maricris Jacinto, BAC Secretariat, Property Division, 2nd Floor, DSWD, Batasan Pambansa Complex Constitution Hills, Quezon City with telephone numbers (632) 931-8161, (632) 931-8101 to 07 local 125, and fax number (632) 951-7116.
4. All sealed bids (complete with all requirements) must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than 2% of total bid price in the form of a bank guarantee, irrevocable standby letter of credit, cashier's check, certified check or cash, and must be delivered to the BAC Secretariat on or before 9:00 AM of **16 May 2002. Late bids shall be rejected.** Thereafter, bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend, venue of which shall be announced in the pre-bid conference.
5. The Department of Social Welfare and Development will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids.
6. Prior to bid opening, a pre-bid conference will be held on **11 May 2002**, 8:30 AM at the Board Room 4th Floor, DSWD, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City.
7. The DSWD-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality in the bids received and/or to accept the bid as may be considered most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **RHODA F. YAP**
Assistant Secretary and BAC Chairperson

(PDI--Apr. 25 & May 2, 2002)

Republika ng Pilipinas
KAGAWARAN NG KAGALINGANG PANLIPUNAN AT PAGPAPAUNLAD
(DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT)
BATASAN PAMBANSA COMPLEX, CONSTITUTION HILLS
QUEZON CITY

Invitation for Bids

IFB NO. ECD-PMO/02-DSWD-002

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of the Early Childhood Development Project (Loan No. ADB-ADF 1607 PHI). It is intended that part of the proceeds of the loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for the Supply and Delivery of ECD Resource Center supplies and materials for below 6 years old.

Package No.	Item
01	Puppets
02	Blocks
03	Dressing Frames
04	Picture Puzzles
05	Toy Cars and Kitchen Playset
06	Rag and Dressing Dolls
07	Pre-writing motor skills Board
08	Musical Instruments
09	Plastic Storage Bins
10	Rubber Tiles

2. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders from member countries of ADB for the supply of the Goods for the purposes of the Project.
3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and secure the complete bidding documents, upon presentation of a letter of intent, from **30 April to 4 May 2002** from Ms. Maricris Jacinto, BAC Secretariat, Property Division, 2nd Floor, DSWD, Batasan Pambansa Complex Constitution Hills, Quezon City with telephone numbers (632) 931-8161, (632) 931-8101 to 07 local 125, and fax number (632) 951-7116.
4. All sealed bids (complete with all requirements) must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than 2% of total bid price in the form of a bank guarantee, irrevocable standby letter of credit, cashier's check, certified check or cash, and must be delivered to the BAC Secretariat on or before 10:00 AM of **11 May 2002. Late bids shall be rejected.** Thereafter, bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend, venue of which shall be announced in the pre-bid conference.
5. The Department of Social Welfare and Development will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids.
6. Prior to bid opening, a pre-bid conference will be held on **4 May 2002**, 9:00 AM at the Board Room 4th Floor, DSWD, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City.
7. The DSWD-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality in the bids received and/or to accept the bid as may be considered most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **RHODA F. YAP**
Assistant Secretary and BAC Chairperson

(PDI--Apr. 25, 2002)

INQUIRER

TRiViA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Seeing (and looking) red

Q. Why does the face become flushed when you're angry?

A. The flush and its anger is masterminded by the hypothalamus, the part of the brain that regulates many body emotions. The hypothalamus coordinates the work of the two divisions of your nervous system -- the sympathetic, which accelerates the heart and constricts the blood vessels, and the parasympathetic, which helps the anger reactions to pass. The adrenal glands are quickly activated in anger, too, releasing hormones into the blood and shunting more blood to the muscles. Tiny blood vessels that supply the face and surrounding areas suddenly widen, allowing more blood than usual to flow through, thus giving you a beet-red look.

Classified Odd. In 1877 in New York City, a woman was bitten on the finger by Jimmy, an organ-grinder's monkey. She demanded retribution, but the judge said he could not commit an animal. Miffed, the lady stormed out of the courtroom, snarling, "This is a nice country for justice!" The monkey showed his appreciation: He curled his tail around the gas fixtures on the judge's desk and tried to shake hands with him. The police blotter gave this record of the event: *Name:* Jimmy. *Occupation:* Monkey. *Disposition:* Discharged."

Past Forward. This day in 1956: Rocky Marciano (born Rocco Francis Marchegiano in Brockton, Massachusetts) retired after 49 professional fights -- winning 43 by knockout -- the only world heavyweight champion to hang up his gloves undefeated. He died in a plane crash near Newton, Iowa, in 1969, a day after celebrating his 46th birthday.

WORD WATCH

Superannuate (soo pehr an yoo wayt) : to set aside as old-fashioned or outdated; to retire, esp. with a pension, because of old age.

PDI – April 25, 2002

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
MAYNILA, PILIPINAS

PREQUALIFICATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF REBIDDING AND INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors currently accredited with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for pre-qualification and if later found qualified, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title	: **Renovation and Extension of the Bangko Sentral Cotabato Branch (Phase 2)**
Scope of Work	: Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision and other services and performing all testing and other operations necessary for the construction and completion of the project all in accordance with the requirements of the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location	: BSP-Cotabato Branch Sinsuat corner Quezon Avenue, Cotabato City
Approved Budget	: Pesos Twenty Million Five Hundred Seven Thousand Two Hundred Two and 26/100 (P 20,507,202.26)
Source of Funding	: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)	
PCAB License / IAC Classification	: IAC Category at least Medium (Building and Industrial Plant) for the past three (3) consecutive years
Contractor's Construction Experience	: Has satisfactorily completed in the past three (3) years at least three (3) construction / renovation projects of similar Architectural and Engineering (A & E) works one of which costs not less than Ten Million Five Hundred Pesos (10,500,000.00) such as construction / renovation involving architectural (including finishing, plumbing, mechanical and electrical works of commercial or institutional buildings requiring medium to high end finishes and good workmanship (projects may include offices, commercial centers, educational institutions, hotels and other of similar or greater complexity to the BSP's required project).
Credit Line / Cash Deposit Certificate Req't.	: Pesos Two Million Fifty Thousand (P 2,050,000.00)
Prequalification Statement Forms	
Cost of Forms	: Two Hundred Pesos per set (P 200.00/set)
Date and Time of Issuance	: Apr. 12 to 26, 2002 / 9:30 am to 12:00 nn & 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm
Place of Issuance and Submission of Accomplished Prequalification Statement / Documents	: PBAC Secretariat Rm 204 (Tel No. 524-7011 loc 3143) 2nd Floor - Five Storey Building BSP Complex A. Mabini corner P. Ocampo (former V. Cruz) Streets, Manila
Deadline of Submission	: **May 2, 2002 10:00 AM**
Notice of Prequalification / Predisqualification	
Date and Time of Issuance	: May 09, 2002 / 9:30 am to 12:00 nn & 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm
Place of Issuance	: PBAC Secretariat Rm 204
Bid / Tender Documents	: Shall be issued only to prequalified contractors upon payment of the non-refundable cost of the documents.
Cost of Documents / Place of Issuance	: Five Thousand Pesos per set (P 5,000.00/set) PBAC Secretariat Rm 204
Date and Time of Issuance	: May 10, 2002 / 9:30 am to 12:00 nn & 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm
Pre-bid Conference	
Date and Time	: May 20, 2002 10:00 AM
Venue	: BMD Conference Room / 2nd Floor - Five Storey Building BSP Complex
Submission and Opening of Bids	
Deadline/Venue of Submission	: June 10, 2002 / 9:00 am to 10:00 am / PBAC Secretariat Room 204

Date, Time and Venue of Issuance of Bid Documents, Pre-Bid Conference and Deadline of Submission/Opening of Bids shall be confirmed in the Notice of Prequalification.

For inquiries, please call PBAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.

Schedule for issuance of notice for prequalification/predisqualification up to deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

Contractors that are previously declared/considered prequalified to bid for this project are automatically considered qualified to join the rebidding and are only required to submit a letter of intent if interested to join.

Guidelines stipulated in the provisions of PD 1594 and its implementing Rules and Regulations, as amended and other applicable rules & regulations shall apply relative to pre-qualification, bidding, evaluation of bids & award of contract.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractor/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obligated to compensate/indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) **MARCOS J. SIONGCO, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI--April 13, 20 & 25, 2002)

KAGAWARAN NG KATARUNGAN
PANGASIWAAN SA PATALAAN NG LUPAIN
(LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY)
East Avenue cor. NIA Road
Quezon City

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

The Land Registration Authority (LRA) invites all interested parties to submit a Letter of Intent for the following services:

Type of Service	Manpower Requirement	Place of Deployment
Janitorial Services	Forty Five (45)	Nationwide
Security Services	Fifty Eight (58)	Nationwide

Eligibility Forms can be secured on May 3 - 8, 2002 from the BAC Secretariat at the Property Section, Lower Ground Floor, LRA Building, East Avenue corner NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City, upon proper submission of the following Registration requirements:

a. Certified true copy of DTI or SEC certificate;
b. Certified true copy of Latest/Current business license;
c. Certified true copy of Taxpayer's Identification Number; and
d. Sworn statement of the prospective bidder that it is not "black listed" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation.

Deadline for the submission of Eligibility requirements is on May 15, 2002. Eligible parties shall be issued a complete set of Bid Documents on May 20 to May 21, 2002 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00.

Sealed Bids shall be received and opened at the Multi-Purpose Hall on the following dates and time:

Type of Service	Date	Time
1. Janitorial Services	June 03, 2002	10:00 a.m.
2. Security Services	June 03, 2002	2:00 p.m.

The BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formality in the bids received, and accept such offer that may be considered advantageous to LRA.

The bidder shall bear all costs in the preparation of their bids and the government shall in no case be responsible or liable for their costs regardless of the outcome of the bidding process.

ATTY. ROSALINDA G. ALONZO, CESO V
Director II and Acting BAC Chairman

(PDI--April 25 & May 5, 2002)

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Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
MAYNILA, PILIPINAS

PREQUALIFICATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors currently accredited with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for pre-qualification and if later found qualified, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title	: **Rehabilitation of Existing Sewage Treatment Plant**
Scope of Work	: Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision and other services for the complete rehabilitation/ improvement of existing sewage treatment plant to include but not limited to civil, mechanical, electrical and architectural works all in accordance with the approved drawings, technical specifications, methodologies/facilities and equipment specifications of BSP. Work includes start-up and commissioning of the rehabilitated sewage plant.
Project Location	: BSP - Security Plant Complex in East Avenue, Quezon City
Approved Budget	: Pesos Five Million Seven Hundred Thirty Five Thousand One Hundred Thirty Two (P5,735,132.00)
Source of Funding	: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)	
PCAB License/IAC Classification	: IAC Category at least Medium (Sewerage and Sewage Treatment Disposal Plant)
Contractor's Construction Experience	: Has satisfactorily completed in the past five (5) years at least three (3) construction rehabilitation of sewage treatment plant projects one of which costs not less than Five Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P5,500,000.00). Must have performed testing, commissioning and operation of sewage treatment plant that passes the effluent quality standard of DENR Adm. Order No. 35.
Credit Line/Cash Deposit Certificate Requirement	: Pesos Five Hundred Seventy Three Thousand Pesos (P573,000.00)
Prequalification Statement Forms	
Cost of Forms	: Two Hundred Pesos per set (P200.00/set)
Date and Time of Issuance	: April 12 to 26, 2002; 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Place of Issuance and Submission of	: PBAC Secretariat Rm. 204 (Tel. No. 524-7011 to loc. 3143)
Accomplished Prequalification Statement/Documents	: 2nd Floor - Five Storey Building BSP Complex, A. Mabini corner P. Ocampo (formerly V. Cruz) Streets, Manila
Deadline of Submission	: May 2, 2002; 10:00 AM
Notice of Prequalification/Predisqualification	
Date and Time of Issuance	: May 9, 2002; 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Place of Issuance	: PBAC Secretariat, Rm. 204
Bid/Tender Documents	: Shall be issued only to prequalified contractors upon payment of the non-refundable cost of the documents
Cost of Documents/ Place of Issue	: Three Thousand Pesos per set (P3,000.00/set) PBAC Secretariat, Rm. 204
Date and Time of Issuance	: May 10, 2002; 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Pre-bid Conference	
Date and Time	: May 21, 2002; 10:00 AM
Venue	: BMD Conference Room, 2nd Floor - Five Storey Building BSP Complex
Submission and Opening of Bids	
Deadline/Venue of Submission	: June 10, 2002; 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.; PBAC Secretariat Room 204

Date, Time and Venue of Issuance of Bid Documents, Pre-Bid Conference and Deadline of Submission/Opening of Bids shall be confirmed in the Notice of Prequalification.

For inquiries, please call **PBAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.**

Schedule of issuance of notice of prequalification/predisqualification up to deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

Guideline stipulated in the provisions of PD 1594 and its implementing Rules and Regulations, as amended and other applicable rules and regulations shall apply relative to pre-qualification, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractor/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Futhermore, BSP is not obligated to compensate/indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) **MARCOS J. SIONGCO, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI--April 13, 20 & 25, 2002)

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF PILI (Camarines Sur), Inc. (RBPI)

1. The PDIC shall start claims settlement operations in the closed Rural Bank of Pili (Camarines Sur), Inc. for the insured deposits with balances over P10,000.00 up to the statutory limit of P100,000.00 per depositor and resume receiving/processing claims for those with balances of P10,000.00 and below.
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank from **April 26** to **May 21, 2002**, Mondays thru Fridays, during office hours, where PDIC representatives are stationed to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors.

   After **May 21, 2002**, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC office from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or by mail addressed to:

   The Manager
   Claims Processing Department
   Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
   2228 Chino Roces Avenue, 1231 Makati City

3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to our representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposit; and
   b. Latest identification document (ID) bearing the depositor's signature

   Other documents may be required by our representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

4. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591 as amended by R.A. 7400, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Pili (Camarines Sur), Inc. is on **August 12, 2003.** After **August 12, 2003**, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI - April 25, 2002)

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ENGR. LEO C. EDRALIN

Passed away on April 20, 2002 at 10:15 p.m. in Alberta, Calgary, Canada.
Born on July 1, 1909. He was 94 years old.

His wife **Teresa** (†); children **Arturo** and **Fe, Sylvia, Leo Mar** (†), **Raquel** (†) and **Bobi, Ferdinand** and **Jingle, Agnes, Mila** and **Shyam, Raul** and **Agnes**; and grandchildren **Bambi, Rachel, Aaron, Bernie, Sandra, Ria, Xandro, Dart, Omar, Zarah, Marnie, Melissa, Camille** and **Monica** and great grandchild **Kyle**... will always love and cherish him.

Final Mass and Interment will be held in St. Michael's Chapel in Alberta, Calgary in Canada on April 24, 2002.

Mass & prayers in Manila will be offered at the Archdiocesan Shrine of the Divine Mercy, Mandaluyong City, April 28, 2002, Sunday at 4:30 p.m.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

John 3:16

Major JOSE T. PADAOAN, SR. Ret. (AFP)

Oct. 5, 1915 - April 22, 2002

His wife **Virginia Lazo**; children **Jose Jr.** (†) and **Lydia**, **Edgardo** and **Letty**, **Rolando** and **Linda**, **Zenaida** and **Jose Mariquina**, **Bella**, **Rosario** and **Ronillo Bautista** and grandchildren request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 27, 2002, at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 9:00 am Mass at San Roque Parish Church, Mandaluyong City.

"Happy are those who have died in the Lord, let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with them."

Rev. 14:13

LEONARDO "DANDING" R. PITUK

Peacefully joined His Lord and Saviour
on April 20, 2002 at the age of 76.

His bereaved wife **Trinidad**; children and their spouses **Annabel, Carolyn & Eric, Ronald & Elma**; grandchildren **Ralph, Franchesca, Kaye Ann, Kyle, Danielle, Ian, Nicole, Gabrielle & André** and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in praying for the eternal repose and happiness of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel A, La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at the Ever Memorial Garden, Valenzuela City on Sunday, April 28, 2002 after the 1:00 p.m. Necrological Service.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS •

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any Identification document (I.D.)

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"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."
Philippians 1:21

JULIA ARICAYOS-BARANGAN

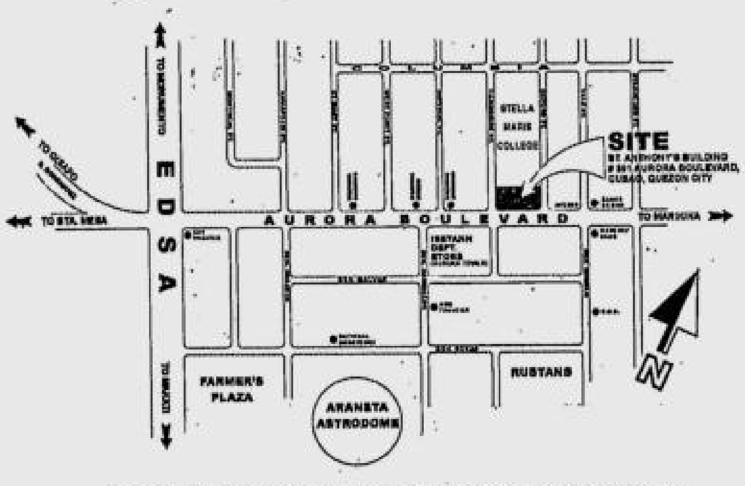
Died at the Grace of our Lord
on April 21, 2002 at the age of 69.

Her bereaved husband **Raymundo C. Barangan**; daughters and in-laws **Juliet** and **Darren, Annie, Cristy** and **Bong**; sisters **Nena** (†), **Nora, Ched & Helen**; brothers-in-law; grandchildren **Francesca, Jetrho, Jabez** other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 28, 2002, 8:30 a.m. at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS



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For inquiries, please call **912-9008 to 11.**

The American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc.

Board of Directors, Members and Staff would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the bereaved family of

Philip J. Gielczyk

Director/Treasurer, The American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc.

Vice President, ASEAN for the Asia Pacific Council of American Chambers of Commerce (APCAC)

Director, Phil. Affairs and Regional Director, Center for Technology Cooperation, US ASEAN Business Council

Who peacefully joined our Lord on April 19, 2002 at the age of 51.

He is survived by his loving wife Diosdada "Josie" and son Michael Joseph.

We request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

IN MEMORY OF

PHILIP J. GIELCZYK

JULY 29, 1950 - APRIL 19, 2002

US - ASEAN
BUSINESS COUNCIL, INC.

The members of the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council wish to honor the memory of our friend and colleague, Philip J. Gielczyk.

There are few Americans who have given most of their lives and dedicated efforts to bringing the people of our countries together.

We pledge to continue this effort with unwavering commitment in his honor.

BUSINESS

SGV drops Andersen for Ernst and Young

THE COUNTRY'S leading accounting firm has dropped its affiliation with US firm Arthur Andersen.

In a statement, Sycip Gorres Velayo and Co. said it signed a memorandum of understanding toward "combining (our) practices" with another major accounting firm, Punongbayan and Araullo, the current local affiliate of Ernst and Young.

This is being done "with a view to affiliate with Ernst and Young's worldwide network," SGV said in its statement without mentioning the embattled accountancy firm of Arthur Andersen.

Andersen is currently struggling for its survival in the United States, where it is under indictment for obstruction of justice in connection with the failure of US energy trader Enron last December.

Since then Andersen has lost several of its largest clients and has seen its foreign units rushing to merge with rivals such as Ernst and Young, KPMG, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Deloitte and Touche.

The combined Philippine firm, under the name of Sycip Gorres Velayo and Co., is expected to be in place by July, subject to due diligence and final approval by the partners, the statement said. **AFP**

CR-V

Nissan, Honda launch roomy vehicle models

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

NISSAN Motor Philippines Inc. and Honda Cars Philippines Inc. are upbeat on the prospects of their new models—the Nissan Serena Q-RV and the Honda CR-V 2002—that meet buyers' preference for affordable and roomy vehicles.

However, NMPI and HCPI said that the industry's sales growth would be capped by the continued influx of imported used vehicles in the country.

Based on separate interviews, NMPI president Jack Wu and HCPI vice president Arnel Doria said they expected the Serena (selling price: P950,000 to P1.1 million) and CR-V 2002 (selling price: P899,000 to P959,000) to attract more browsers into their showrooms.

Wu said the Serena would broaden NMPI's product line by adding a mini-van to its core products—the Nissan Sentra and Cefiro—to attract buyers looking for bigger vehicles.

Doria said the remodeled CR-V 2002 was expected to spark renewed interest in the CR-V whose share in the highly competitive sport utility vehicle market has shrunk from 52 percent to 3 percent over the last two years.

NMPI and HCPI kept prices of their new models manageable to middle-income buyers by installing more seats on their units to avail themselves of the Bureau of Internal Revenue's tax exemption to 10-seater vehicles.

HCPI actually amended the registration of its CR-V with the BOI by transferring it from the SUV category to the Asian utility vehicle (AUV) segment together with the best-selling Toyota Tamaraw, Mitsubishi Adventure and Isuzu Hi-Lander.

Q-RV

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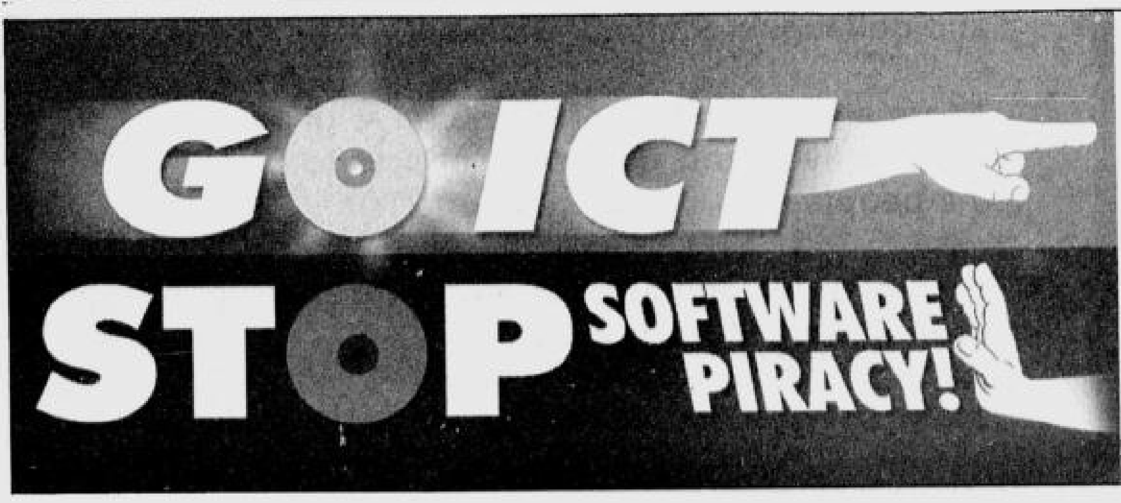

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Of lofty ideals and dreamy desserts

JACK'S Cheesecake

By Alex Y. Vergara

BUSINESS partners John Tian Seng and Eric Cua have such fond memories of the weekend parties they had at their friend's home in Vancouver that when they opened their first venture in Manila recently, they decided to name the place after him.

Named after Canadian Jack Johnston, Jack's Loft has become one popular after-dinner café and dessert place to open at the Eastwood City Walk. But unlike such established names as Starbucks and Seattle's Best, there's more to Jack's Loft than rich cheesecake, piping hot Brazilian coffee and refreshing iced latte. It also serves a wide selection of meals—from soups to salads, pastas to hot dishes.

"Jack's Loft was inspired by the good times we had at Jack's," says John, who was based in Canada for nearly two decades before re-

OF/ p.C2

Good times at a friend's loft gave sweet inspiration to two guys to open a café that serves the best cheesecake this side of Libis

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1) 8:30 - 12:30 CHILDREN'S ART DOUBLE THE FUN / Includes Baking, Cooking & Cake Decorating- A sister brings a brother, a friend brings another, two children at only P9,500 Ingredient & materials INCLUDED - May 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17. Next Schedule: May 20, 21, 22, 23 & 24.

2) May 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10, 2002 / 8:30 am - 5:00 pm - MASTER COURSE IN CAKE DECORATING (BASIC) - P7,500. Learn the practical & easy method of making 20 kinds of icing flowers, simple borders, scrolls & strings, cake designing, sugar molding, color flow, color technique, wedding cake assembly. Next schedule: June 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7, 2002

3) May 11, 2002 - NEW CAKES, PASTRIES AND COOKIES - P2,500. Cooked Carrot Cake, Banana Cake, Peanut Butter, Coconut Cookies, Choco-Chip Cookies, Chocolate Nut, Hopia, Siopao. Ingredients included. Next schedule: June 8, 2002

4) May 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17, 2002/ 8:30 am - 5:00 pm - ADVANCED GUMPASTE & FOREIGN METHOD CAKE DECORATING - P7,500. New method of gumpaste, flowers, objects, marzipan, quilling, swags & ribbons, ribbon insertion, finest string works, lace pieces, fondant, chocolate fondant. Next schedule: June 10 - 14, 2002

5) May 18, 2002 - LEARN THE SUGAR-FREE CAKES AND BREADS - P4,000. Banana, Apple Almond, Chocolate, Apple Walnut & Carrot Cakes, All-Wheat Breads & Raisin Breads. Ingredients included. Next schedule: June 15, 2002

6) May 22, 2002 / 8:30 am - 5:00 pm - NEW METHOD ON FONDANT USING LACE MATS, ROLLING PIN, SWAGS & RIBBONS - P3,000. Next schedule: June 19.

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9) May 22, 23 & 24, 2002 / 8:30 am - 5:00 pm - COLD PORCELAIN DOLL COURSE - P10,500. Make everlasting dolls using the latest technique in new Cold Porcelain Recipe. Next schedule: June 19, 20 & 21, 2002.

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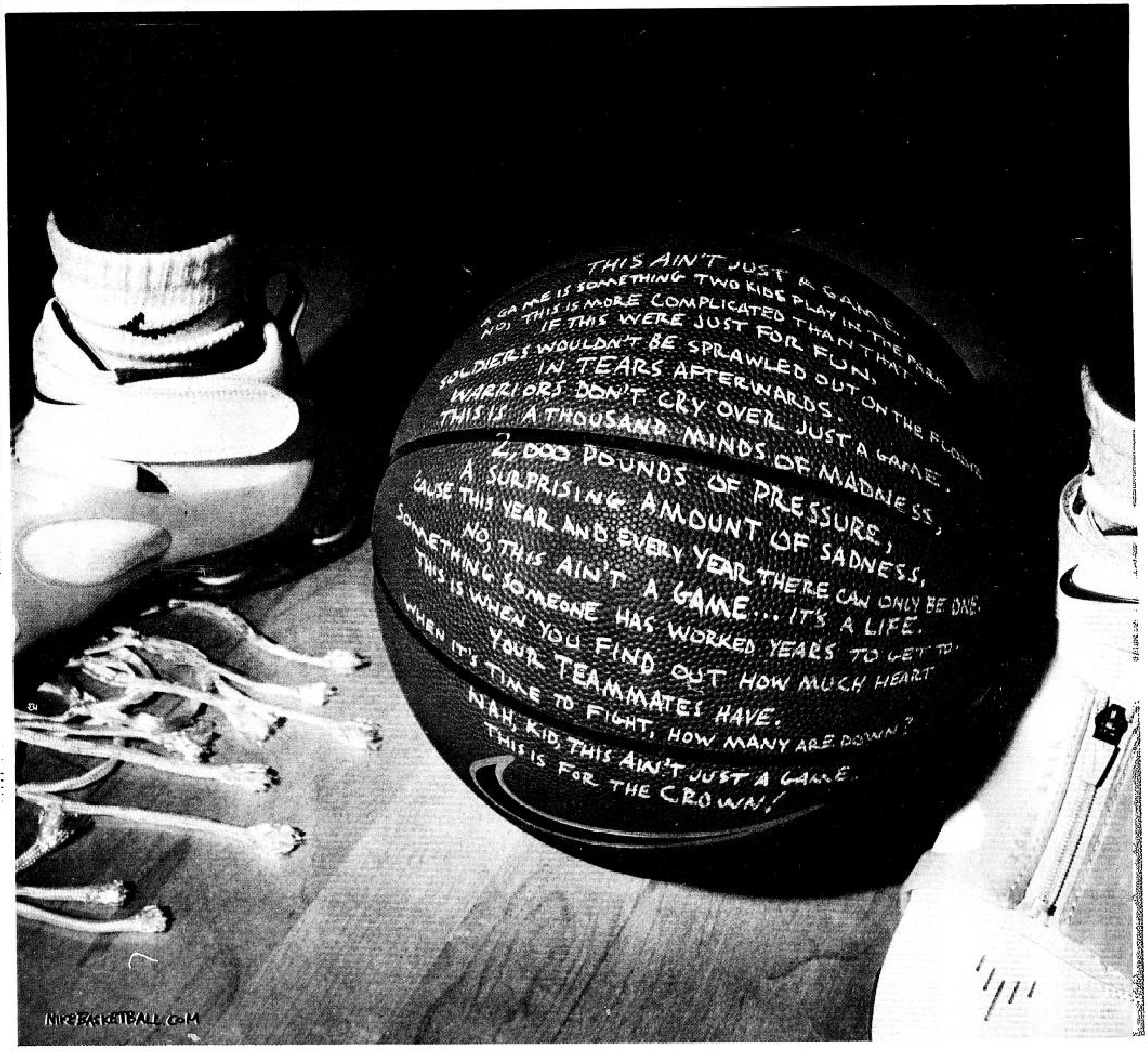

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Of lofty ideals and dreamy desserts

From page C1

turning to the Philippines with his wife a year ago. "We'd hang out regularly by the loft to swap stories and share good food."

The partners hope to recapture the mood through Jack's Loft's cozy interior, with its brown walls, hardwood floor, mood lighting and laid-back furniture pieces. True to its name, the restaurant has a loft overlooking part of the first floor. Huge picture windows on the opposite side offer a view of Eastwood City Walk's lively night scene, including passers-by, night market shoppers and diners who opt to dine al fresco.

Groups that want to linger a bit longer can make use of a private room upstairs, where they can squat on the floor and dine Japanese-style. Jack's Loft is open from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. on weekdays, and up to 3 p.m. on weekends.

"When we first opened in December," says John, "people had the impression that we only served desserts. They were surprised to find out that we also offer dinner."

Admittedly, though, desserts are still Jack's Loft's main come-ons. Having worked for a similar establishment in Vancouver years ago, John knows a good cheesecake when he tastes one. He was thus surprised to find out upon his return to the Philippines that most cheesecakes served here are gelatin-based.

"There's only one way to achieve a rich taste and creamy consistency," he says, "and that's to bake the cheesecake."

Leading its long list of desserts is the New York Cheesecake, a rich blend of sour cream and cream cheese baked and topped with fresh strawberry. Jack's Cheesecake promises to be a lighter fare, consisting of baked cream cheese topped with either preserved blueberries or strawberries in light syrup.

Chocolate lovers, rejoice! Jack's Chocolate Decadent cake lives up to its name and is loaded with thick caramel syrup. Choco Fantasia is literally surrounded, like a tantalizing fortress, by log-shaped meringue and sprinkled on top with chocolate shavings. Sinful, indeed.

Jack's Loft also sells cakes by the box. A sample: Jack's Cheesecake (P1,078); baked New York Cheesecake (P968); Supermoist Chocolate cake (P528); Apple Pie (P520); Mango Moose (P638); Japanese Cheesecake (P620); and the ominous-sounding Death by Chocolate (P748).

Drinks can either soothe your frazzled nerves or keep you awake all night. Aside from its long list of coffee concoctions, Jack's Loft also offers a number of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, from vodka to beer, red to white wine. At P85, the fishbowl iced tea is good enough for two to three people.

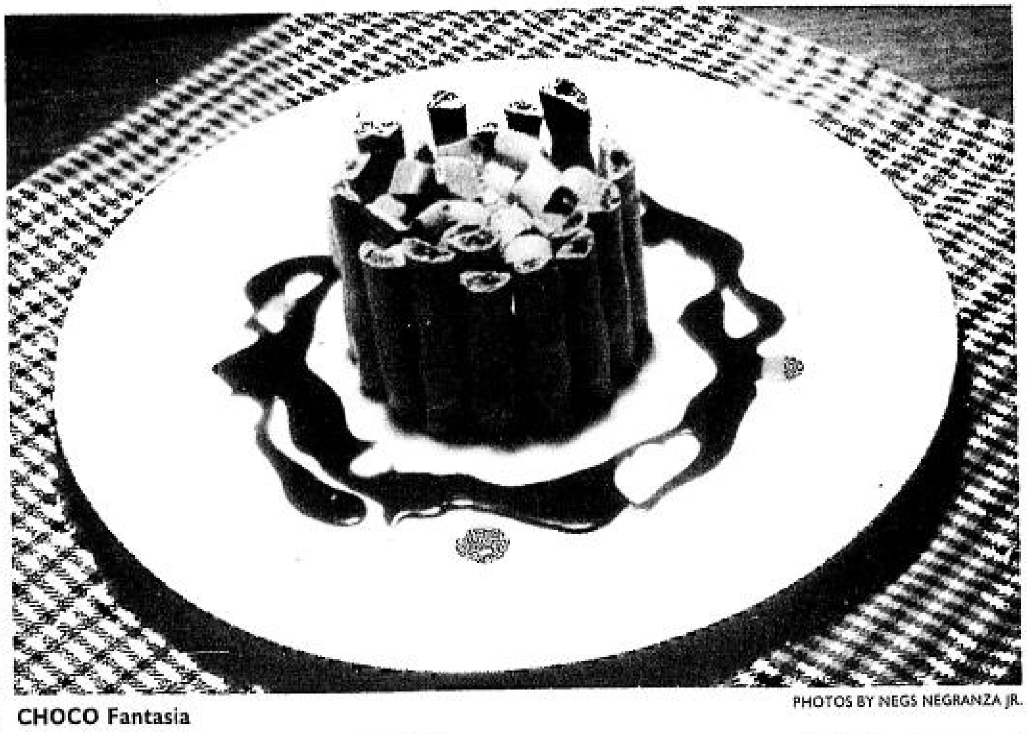
Hot dishes, however, are no mere afterthoughts. We tried some items on the menu, such as the Carrot Pumpkin Soup, Garlic Mushrooms, Beef Salpicao and one of the house's specialties—Wild Rice Risotto. We ended the dining experience pleased, stuffed and with very little room for the dessert.

Indeed, for a place that specializes in desserts, Jack's Loft's dinner offerings are quite tasty and loaded with flavors and nuances. The partners, with the help of several food consultants, are now busy developing a lunchtime menu. They hope to start serving lunch sometime in May.

"The public's initial response has been very encouraging," says John. "Everything has exceeded our expectations."

If only Jack could see his friends now.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph



PHOTOS BY NEGS NEGRANZA JR.

CHOCO Fantasia

JACK'S Chocolate Decadent cake

Milkfish as healthy alternative

SARANGANI Bay of Alsons Aqua Technologies Inc. (AATI) has launched two products that will delight *bangus* lovers and further reinforce its position as the milkfish company of the Philippines.

Bangus lovers eat more of the belly part, but the presence of *bangus* meat usually prevents them from doing so. With the introduction of Choice Cut Belly (pure *tiyan ng bangus*), 100 percent of just the black portion, consumers can now eat as much as they want without the meat in any of the dishes. Furthermore, with AATI's multiproducts, meat is used in other products, hence Choice Cut Belly's price is very reasonable.

Baby Bangus/Split-Marinated is a product that is gaining popularity and acceptance in most of Sarangani Bay's export markets. This baby *bangus*, which is not fully grown (with its soft bones), is especially marinated. Butterfly cut, it can be eaten together with its soft bones when fried. The marinated baby *bangus* is fast gaining strong following and repeat orders from those who have tried the product.

Sarangani Bay Prime Bangus, a healthy food alternative, offers prime dishes like Steamed Fish in Sweet and Sour Sauce, Smoked Bangus Canapé, Escabeche (Macao style), Bogus Fillet in Teriyaki Sauce, Fish Fingers, Fish Shanghai, Kinilaw na Bangus, Sizzling Bangus Sisig, Bistik na Bangus, Calderetang Bangus and Bangus Curry.

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Fun fudge

FUDGY'S Australia, a popular confectionery store down under, specializes in making the finest quality, old-fashioned, handmade authentic fudge. It has been in the business for the past 13 years, and attracts crowds not only because of its mouthwatering delights, but also because it shows customers how the fudge is made.

The same concept is followed in its first outlet in the Philippines at the SM Megamall. Customers can see how the fudge is prepared in specially designed copper pots from France. It is then fired over a US-made open flame steel and cast iron stove with 47 jet burners for perfect heat distribution. Once cooked at a very high temperature, the hot fudge is then poured onto a hot marble table. Fudge chefs then skillfully shape and mould the fudge into logs, slicing these when it has cooled.

Businessman Peter Parcell, who brought Fudgy's to the Philippines, says, "We use only the freshest natural ingredients. Our fudge is 40 percent less sweet than others made overseas, and has 60 different flavors."

And this is where the fudgy fun begins. Fudgy's top seller is its Chocolate Macadamia fudge with whole nuts. Other favorites include Rocky Road, Orange Flavored Chocolate Jaffa, Cookies 'n Cream. It also has fruit—Apricot and Coconut Ice—as well as liqueur flavors like Crème de Menthe and tiny Fudge Balls. Fudge fans will love the exciting selections the store brings out every day.

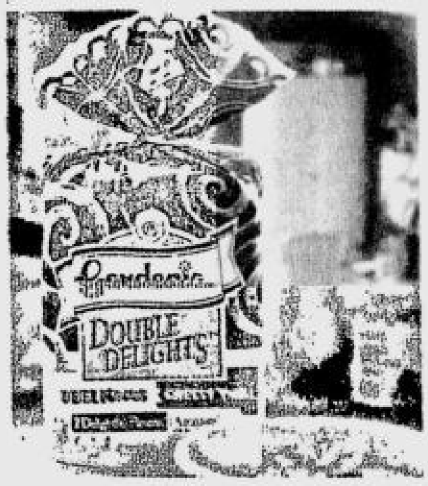
Fudgy's also has toffees—caramel, anise, rum and coconut. "We will have more than 20 toffees eventually available at the store," says Parcell. These will include the more traditional—like toffee with hazelnuts, almonds, marshmallows and raisins; as well as the more experimental like Thai-, Malaysian- and Japanese-flavored toffee.

More fudgy fun nut brittles include peanut, macadamia and coconut selections, as well as cool Australian milkshakes. The latter are made from pure and natural ingredients—cream, milk and glucose imported from Germany. Each of the milkshake flavors—lime, strawberry, chocolate—has a scoop of ice cream. The outlet also serves cappuccino with hot cream.

Since it opened recently, Fudgy's Australia has been getting rave customer reviews. A stickler for cleanliness, Parcell also makes sure that staffers wear hairnets and gloves and make use only of nontoxic sprays and cleaning stuff.

Fudgy's Australia is located at the UG/F SM Megamall A.

BESTSELLER. Chocolate Macadamia fudge with whole nuts



2 IN 1
Gardenia Double Delights, the first of its kind, offers two different flavors—ube and cheese—in one loaf. The contrast in color and taste between *ube* and cheese gives the bread a unique flavor. Great to eat as it is or fun as sandwiches for parties.

Treat your veggies right

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- Store your onions in an open container in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. They should stay fresh for four weeks once ripe.
- Cabbage will stay fresh for three weeks by storing them in the fridge sealed in Glad storage bags.
- Cucumbers will stay good for one week when placed in plastic bags in the fridge.
- Before storing lettuce, wash it under running water and drain well. When you place the lettuce in a plastic bag, it will keep fresh for 10 days. If the outside becomes wilted, peel off the outer leaves and you will see that the inside is still fresh.

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One-dish wonder

IN GOOD TASTE

Doreen G. Fernandez

SINIGANG I consider the quintessential Filipino dish. It is found all over the country in varying degrees of sourness, using a colorful spectrum of native meats, vegetables and sour fruits. It has sister-dishes in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam, sour broths being cooling in our tropical weathers. (Contrast their effect with that of heavy cream soups that in temperate zones help keep one warm.)

And what a wealth of goodness it draws on and brings.

Sour ingredients

The sourness first. The most common souring ingredients in the Philippines are *sampaloc* (tamarind) and *kamias* (*bilimbi*). The latter cluster generously on the trunks of small, home yard trees and in *tumpok-tumpok* on market vendors' tables. Tamarind fruits to boil and mash are available almost year-round. The cooks of Pandan Grill, however, prepare and freeze the mashed pulp for use when the fruit is not at hand.

But those are only the beginnings of an island-wide souring lexicon. Ilonggo Visayans use *batuan* (*Garcia morella*), a small, hard green fruit with one seed. Tagalogs use *alibangbang* (*bauhinia*) leaves, which are plentiful in Antipolo. Others use green mango or green pineapples; *bayabas* or *santol*. In a pinch or by choice (for a mild sourness), tomatoes crushed into the broth are effective. So is, in a real emergency, the juice of *kalamansi*. Using *am* or *hugas-bigas* (water in which rice has been washed) augments the sourness as well.

Thus sour fruits and leaves, which, an artist has pointed out, dominate our bright sour-colored landscapes, bless the land, and local knowledge has prescribed what and how they can be used to sour *sinigang* broth.

What kind of meat?

What fish, seafood and meats swim in this green-gold soup? A many-splendored company. Pork, of course, preferably the bony parts which enrich the soup and amplify the challenge. Not pork chops usually, although those have bones, too; rather the *pecho*, ribs, and the like. Beef, too, again the bony parts, for a heftier texture. Also goat and dog, for those who prefer or are used to them. And yes, wild boar. The reopened May Farm in Pampanga has it as *sinigang sa bayabas*.

Chicken becomes *sinampalukang manok*, soured not by tamarind fruits but by the young leaves, flowerets and sprouts. *Sinigang na manok*, Cely Kalaw prepares on order in her Sinigang Bar—with *sampaloc* fruit, in a broth thickened with *gabi*.

Then: most creatures that swim the rivers and seas. Large red prawns, smaller shrimp. *Ulang* (crayfish) with the large sweet, coral-laden heads; and lake fish like *kanduli*. The Laguna de Bay *ulo ng carpa* is spectacular for *sinigang*, with its special fat and gelatinous tissues and bellows. Elite fish like *apahap*, *mameng*, *maya-maya* and *lapu-lapu*, the more democratic *bangus* (from small to *sabalo* size) and *tilapia*. Even, the late Digon Vocalan of Balaw-balaw told us, the poor man's fish, *ayungin*. He would enrich the broth for this with shrimp head juice in a stew he called *barotak*.

Sip the broth, take the fish or meat with the rice, enjoy the veggies—eating 'sinigang' is one of the privileges of being Filipino

GENE Gonzalez

Foreign fish are not discriminated against, and thus salmon heads and bellies are treasured for *sinigang*, giving their special color and flavor and crunchy soft bones. Myrna Segismundo's Salmon Head Sinigang (cf. "The Party Cookbook") began, she says, at a Filipino Food Festival in Israel. When she went to pick up her requisition at the butcher shop, she saw them throwing away the fish heads—and the rest is history.

Gene Gonzalez makes, when he can get it, a *hamachi* head *sinigang* that blows the mind. On the principle that different main ingredients call for their own types of souring—sharp, rounded, mellifluous, mild, strong, etc.—salmon and *hamachi* are not soured as are *bangus* and *apahap*. Different strokes for different folks.

Many are the innovations made by the chefs of the moment. Ed Quimson has made *sinigang* of *lechon*, and of ham. On Ricky Gutierrez's Chateau 1771 menu is a corned beef *sinigang*. Claude Tayag has combined *tanguingue* and *lechon* in a *sinigang* he improvised after a visit to the Dumaguete and Malatapay markets. What Glenda Barretto calls Seafood in Sour Broth ("Via Mare: A Seafood Cookbook") is a *sinigang* of fresh mussels, clams and prawns, scallops and milkfish bellies, simmered in rice washing, and soured with tamarind juice from strained pulp. Myrna Segismundo makes a Green Mango Sinigang Sauce and a Tomato Sinigang Sauce, which she serves with steamed fresh salmon fillet and scallops—a brothless twist on *sinigang*.

ED Quimson

MYRNA Segismundo

CLAUDE Tayag

Veggies

The vegetables for *sinigang* are many, and there is no fixed formula for pairing or combining. Rather, the prescription is: use those fruit and leaf vegetables which will enhance the main ingredient—ordinary backyard bounty, or what is available at the local *tabu* or *palengke*. Thus, small, tender, slightly sticky *gabi*. *Kangkong* and *kamote* tops. Rounds of tender radish; lengths of stringbeans. Eggplants; *puso ng saging*. Okra and onions, quartered or crushed tomatoes. Green bananas, as Cely Kalaw does in her *sinigang na manok*. And some *siling haba* for aroma or for a spark of chili fire.

Some add a little *patis* to their portions. Others prefer a side dish of *bagoong* as a salty whisper; perhaps *bagoong* sautéed with bits of pork, tomatoes and onions. The late Leny Guerrero prepared an accompanying *sawsawan* for her pork *sinigang* with *alibangbang* leaves and young pineapple: *bagoong*, crisp pork bits and *wansoy*. Some add nothing at all, preferring full exposure to the sourness that is right on the edge, *katamtaman lang*.

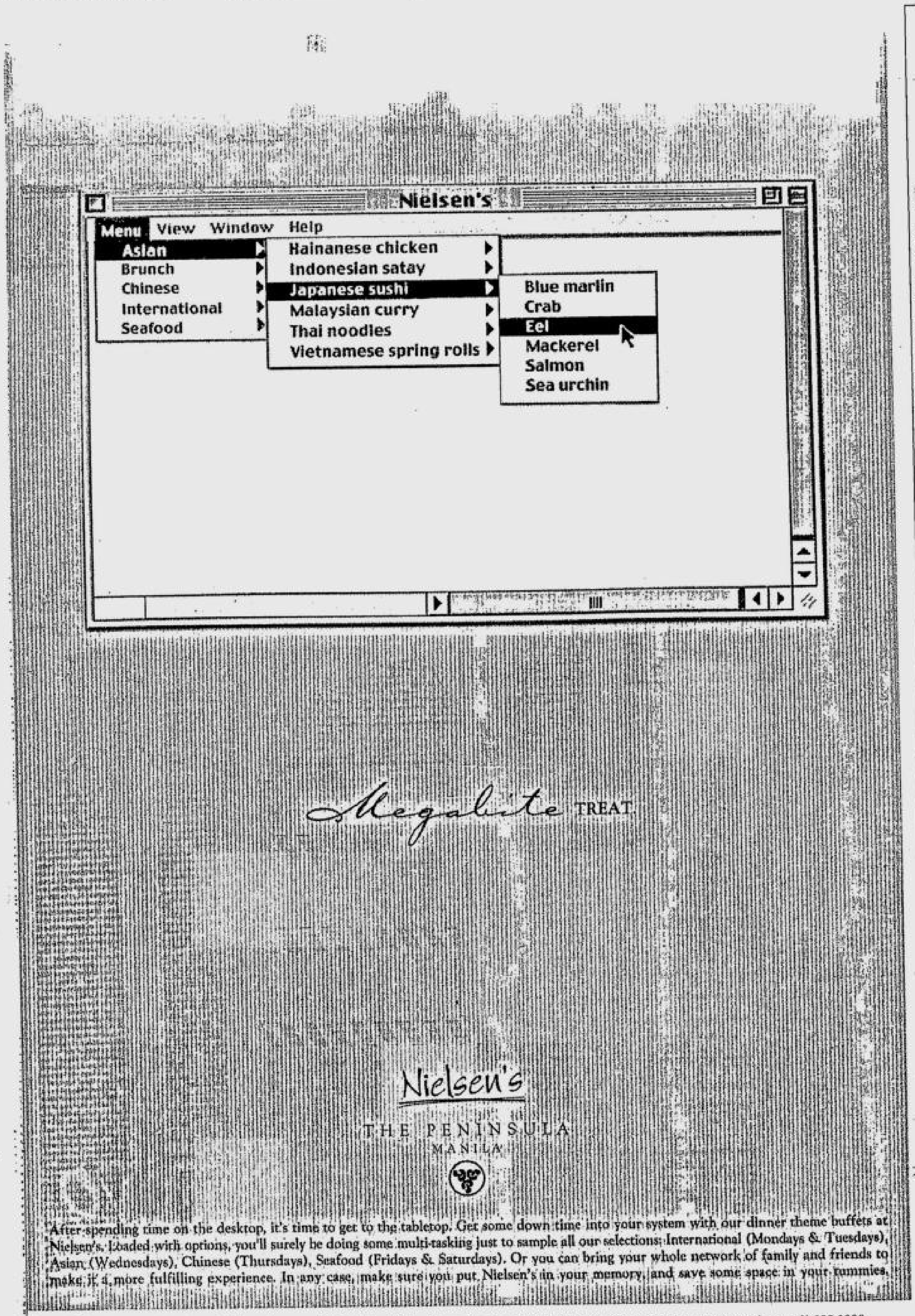
Flexible

Sinigang is a flexible symphony. Its philosophy is that the ideal whole is made up of the basic sour broth that will tenderize and flavor the meat/fish/crustaceans and the vegetables, then meld their essences into a one-dish meal meant to be backgrounded by hot, fluffy steamed rice.

One can wet the rice with the broth, and eat the fish and vegetables as *ulam*. Or one can move back and forth between the elements, as one does at a buffet or banquet table. Or as family members move back and forth in conversation and sharing. Or as the Filipino moves back and forth between himself as individual, fine-tuning his own *sinigang*; himself as community member sharing a common pot; and himself as Filipino savoring a quintessential Filipino experience.

Go to it, then. Inhale the aroma. Sip the broth. Take the fish or meat with the rice. Or make each spoonful one of fish, vegetables, and rice followed by a chaser of soup.

Enjoy the power and the grace. This is one of the privileges of being Filipino.



After spending time on the desktop, it's time to get to the tabletop. Get some down time into your system with our dinner theme buffets at Nielsen's. Loaded with options, you'll surely be doing some multi-tasking just to sample all our selections: International (Mondays & Tuesdays), Asian (Wednesdays), Chinese (Thursdays), Seafood (Fridays & Saturdays). Or you can bring your whole network of family and friends to make it a more fulfilling experience. In any case, make sure you put Nielsen's in your memory, and save some space in your tummies.

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MAY SCHEDULE
RECREATIONAL AND ONE-DAY BUSINESS CLASS

May 02, Thurs. – FRUIT DESSERTS. The title says it all – simple, sweet and divine – Orange Glazed Bananas, Baked Apples with Italian Pudding, Summer Fruit Bowl, Choco Watermelon, Cantaloupe Crostata and Crepes Samurai. Recipes include all ingredients for Ph 1,200.00 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

May 03, Fri. – PANDENINI. Chef Junjun's new concept on Pinoy gourmet sandwiches – hearty fillings flattened on pandesal. Great for any meal. All fillings will be made in class. Quesong Puti and Guava Jelly, Mechado with Fried Saba, Smoked Longganisa with Ilocos Vinegar, Chicken Relleno with Cranberry, Crispy Corned Beef, Tocino with Itlog na Maalat and Special Salmon Sardines. Ph 1,500.00 from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m. including all ingredients.

May 04, Sat. – ASIAN NOODLES. Chef Chariya will teach us different kinds of noodles from Thailand, Vietnam and other countries of our Asian nation. Including all ingredients for Ph1,200.00 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Recipes include Mee Krob, Kwoay Teow, Laksa, Khao Pun and Lad Na.

May 06, Mon. – THAI FAVORITES 1. Bangkok Chef Chariya Thaikupt will teach her favorite Thai dishes like Tom Yam, Paad Thai, Bagoong Rice, Chicken Pandan, Chicken Green Curry and Tako in Pandan leaves. Ph 1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

May 07, Tues. – THAI FAVORITES 2. The recipes from Thai Chef Chariya Thaikupt, Tom Kha Talay, Chicken Satay with Peanut Sauce and Cucumber Salad, Roasted Duck Curry, Crispy Catfish with Green Mango Salad, Thai Halo-halo at Ph 1,200.00 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Recipes include all ingredients.

May 08, Wed. – EASY CATERING DISHES 2. Now that you've learned the basics on how to start the business Chef Jun-jun teaches more dishes to satisfy your client's appetite. On the menu are his recipes for delicious food items ordered by his famous clients. Smoked Fish Mousse, Mushroom and Barley Soup, Italian Short Ribs Stew, Vegetable Lasagne, and to end, the breath-taking, English Trifle. Recipes include all ingredients for Ph1,500.00 from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

May 09, Thurs. – FRESH PASTA WORKSHOP. Chef Jun jun teaches different recipes and methods in making pasta, both plain and colored. Rolling and cutting will be done by hand and machine. Classic sauces to be demonstrated are the following: Garlic and Olive Oil, Tomato and Basil, Pesto, Vongole, and Bolognese. Class Participation. Ph P1,500.00 from 9:00 – 4:00 p.m.

May 10, Fri. – THE SPECIALTY BURGER CLASS. Chef Gino elevates the Beef Patty sandwich into a gourmet's delight with new and original concepts. International variations such as Classic Burgers; Burger de Luxe; Green Peppercorn Burger; Greek Burger; Swiss Burger; Pansan Burger and Sicilian Burger with different side-dishes for Ph 1,500.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

May 11, Sat. – LA CUCINA DELA MAMMA. Monica Nepomuceno comes back after 20 years from Italy and France to present hearty home cooked Italian regional specialties. Recipes include Bruschetta, Crostini di Fegato, Pappa al Pomodoro, Anatra alla Cacciatore and Tiramisu for Ph 1,200.00 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

May 13, Mon. – THE COOKIE WORKSHOP 2. Lace Cookies, Tuiles, Brownies, Florentine, Black n' White and Fig Crosses are the recipes that Chef Jill will teach us. Recipes include all ingredients Ph 1,500.00 for 10:00 – 3:00 p.m.

May 14, Tues. – FAVORITE PASTA DISHES. Pasta dishes from the recipes of Chef Jill Sandique like Spaghetti alla Puttanesca, Fettuccine Alfredo, Penne Alla Pomodoro, Pasta Primavera, Pasta Al Ragu (Bolognese) and Carbonara. For Ph 1,200 including all the ingredients from 10:00 – 3:00 p.m.

May 15 & 16, Wed. & Thurs. – THE COFFEE CLASS 1 & 2. Learn from Chef Gene Gonzalez, the tastemaster of coffee and consultant designer to several coffee house systems teach you (hands-on) the basic of making proper and profitable cups of Americano, Espresso, Cappuccino, Lattés, etc. The class will also touch on the basics of blending, machine and costing on the first day. Day 2 will cover exciting and high profit cold coffee concoctions with creative topping and syrups such as Mocha Madness, Café Seville, Café Tortoni, Coffee Jelly etc. The course is open to both restaurant operators and hobbyists. Recipes include all ingredients from 10:00 – 4:00 for Ph 3,000.00 for the 2 days.

May 17, Fri. – FAST AND EASY COOKING 1. Chef Gino Gonzalez teaches you 8 quick, easy and delicious dishes that busy bodies can be proud of. Strictly for family and friendly eating! Recipes include Warm Pollunchay Salad; Clam Chowder; Baked Leek Tart; Shrimp Croquettes; Pasta Alfredo Sauce; Pinoy Sausage and Olive Pasta, Cumin Crusted Chicken Breast with Balsamic Reduction and Butter Tea Parfait with Lemon Custard Sauce for Ph 1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

May 18, Sat. – FAST AND EASY COOKING 2. This is Chef Gino's part two of his deliciously easy to prepare dishes. Eight good eating dishes include Tuna Garlic Buttenyaki; Gino's Squid Ink Fried Rice, Korean Sliced Beef with Bulgogi Sauce; Sizzling Bistek Kabuta; Chicken Mapo Beancurd; Chicken and Apple Sesame Fritter Salad; Curried, Corn and Pea Fritters with Tamarind Sauce and Asian Custard Fruit Salad for Ph 1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

May 20, Mon. – CHEESECAKE WORKSHOP. No Frills Cheesecake, French Cheesecake, Italian Ricotta, Oreo Cheesecake, Triple Choco Cheesecake and New York Cheesecake.
Ph 1,500.00 from 10:00 – 3:00 p.m.

May 21, Tues. – BAKED PASTA. Chef Jill will teach some of her favorite baked pasta for Ph1,200.00 from 10:00 to 4:00 p.m. Recipes include Classic Lasagne, Manicotti, Chicken Mushroom and Ham Casserole, Penne with Seafood and Asparagus and Baked Macaroni.

May 22, Wed. – EASY CATERING DISHES. Chef Jun-jun De Guzman will help you run an in-house catering and food take-out business. He will discuss menu planning, costing, food portioning, preparation, presentation and others. Dishes to be demonstrated are as follows: Chorizo and Mushroom Platter, Assorted Green Salad with Homemade Ranch Dressing and Pesto Vinaigrette, Eggplant Moussaka, Chicken Imperial, Royal Lapu-lapu and White Chocolate Tiramisu. Recipes include all ingredients for Ph 1,500.00 from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

May 23, Thurs. – THE SPOON DESSERTS. Chef Junjun will make his popular easy to do desserts served and eaten with a spoon. Great for instant parties and big catering jobs. His line-up are the following: Strawberry Cream Magic, Raspberry and Mandarin Gelatina, Tiramisu Now, Apple Bake with Cinnamon Sauce, Cappuccino Pannacotta, Bread and Butter Pudding and Chocolate Budini. Ph 1,200.00 from 10:00 – 3:00 p.m. including all ingredients.

May 24, Fri. – CHOCOLAT!!! Chef Buddy Trinidad from the pastry kitchens of Michael's in Santa Monica and Manhattan and Stars of San Francisco gives us a sampling of his specialties such as Dark Double Chocolate Brownies, Decadent Chocolate Truffles, Chocolate Molten Cake, Buddy's Chocolate Flourless Cake and Chocolate Mirror Glaze for Ph 1,200.00 from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

May 27, Mon. – COFFEESHOP SPECIALTIES 2. Brownie Cheesecake, Cinnamon Sugar Cookies, Honey Orange Cake, Creamcheese Brownies, Scones and Blueberry Coffee Cakes are the recipes from Chef Jill Sandique. Ph 1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

May 28, Tues. – PAELLAS & RISOTTOS. Recipes from Chef Gene like Wild Mushroom and Saffron Risotto with Parmesan, Seafood Risotto with Prosciutto, Squid Ink Paella, Paella alla Majorcana and Arroz con Mariscos from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. for Ph 1,200.00 including all ingredients.

May 29, Wed. – CHOCOLATE CAKES. Recipes from Chef Jill like Fudge Ribbon, Native Chocolate Cake, Le Marquise, Le Diablo, Queen of Sheba and Choco Banana Loaf for Ph 1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

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MOTORING

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Coconut biofuel is engine-friendly, says expert

By Tessa R. Salazar

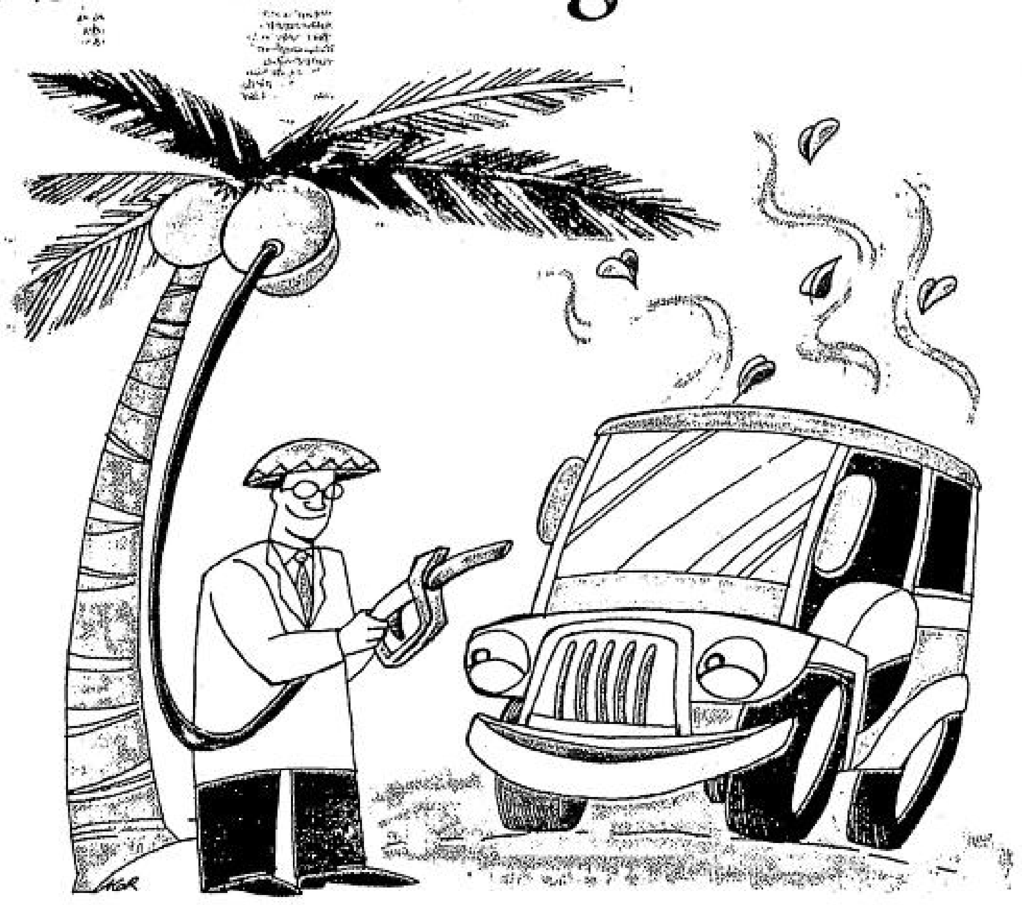

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

COUNTRIES dependent on imported fossil fuels, like the Philippines, are feeling the pinch caused by the rising cost of crude oil prices and petroleum excise duties. Add to that, 70 percent of mineral oil deposits are located in politically unstable areas.

The mounting pressure from environment groups for cleaner air also give more urgency for the concerned agencies to look for ways to make alternative fuel commercially viable, especially since its raw materials could be locally sourced.

For alternative fuel advocates, the time for change is now.

Coconut biofuel advocates have stressed that coconut methyl ester (CME) is the most viable as transport fuels compared to compressed natural gases and alco diesel.

Emil V. Carandang, executive director of the Philippine Coconut Research and Development Foundation Inc., said that CME is the most practical of the three alternative fuels because it is easy to make, easy to apply and environmentally cleaner. The use of biodiesels such as coco methyl ester significantly stabilizes carbon dioxide emission and prevents its increase because carbon dioxide is locked into a closed circuit. Plants, for their growth, absorb the same amount of CO_2 that is released from combustion.

"Coconut methyl ester is of plant origin. If it is burnt to produce carbon dioxide, it goes back to the plant," he said.

No effect

Energy products derived from agriculture-based materials have no serious effects toward global warming, he said. Aside from this, biodiesel is promising not only for the environment but also for farmers and other countries wishing to reduce their dependence on petroleum imports.

Carandang said he fully recommends blending one-percent coco methyl to gasoline and diesel fuel. One percent will not do any damage to the engine, he said. "Based on our initial findings, methyl ester has a detergency effect, a cleansing property," he said.

There is a worldwide move for diesel fuel's sulfur content be lowered to 5 parts per million. At that level, however, there is a danger that the lubricity of the diesel could be lost, and this would be detrimental to the engine. What the petroleum industry can do, he said, is to add an additive to compensate for the lost lubricity.

Adding coco methyl ester replaces the additive intended to compensate for the lost lubricity. The methyl ester itself would provide the necessary lubrication.

Carandang said biodiesels have high lubrication properties, compared to diesel fuels. Thus, there would be less wear and tear to diesel engines' sensitive parts. Coconut biodiesel has even more advantages than other vegetable oil biodiesels. It has medium carbon chain length. Despite high temperatures during intensive running conditions, CME does not melt rubberized fuel lines (hoses).

"Nonmethyl ester only serves as an additive, but coco methyl esther serves as an additive for the lost lubricity and at the same time as fuel," he said.

Supplying one percent of CME to diesel fuel wouldn't affect coconut industry exports, said Carandang. Based on the diesel consumption of Metro Manila in 2000, one percent CME is only equivalent to 1.63 percent of the country's coconut exports, he said.

"So, the coconut industry can very comfortably give 1.63 percent."

Metro Manila's diesel fuel consumption alone runs up to 20 million liters per day. Diesel combustion emits carbon dioxide, contributing to warming atmospheric temperatures leading to the greenhouse effect.

In general, biodiesels have been found to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide by 95 percent, hydrocarbons by 85 percent and air particulate matters by 50 percent.

The culprits

Carandang cited the destructive effects of burning fuels. He said carbon dioxide is responsible for almost half of the greenhouse effects. CH_4 is 25 times worse than CO_2, hydrocarbons is 11 times worse than CO_2, Nitrogen Oxide is 8 times worse than CO_2 and nitrous oxide 270 times worse than CO_2.

"Reduction of these gases is impossible for as long as vehicles and machinery run on fossil or petroleum fuels," he added.

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Defensive parking

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

JUST as there is defensive driving, there must be defensive parking.

In defensive driving, you drive as if all the other motorists on the road were crazy (which isn't far-fetched in this country) so as to avoid getting into an accident. In defensive parking, you behave as if the other motorists also looking for a place to park were armed and dangerous. This way, you avoid getting into a violent or life-threatening situation.

If you think you're too macho or too important a person to yield to another motorist in a parking facility, remember that many an argumentative man has been fatally shot, wounded, maimed or mauled in a tiff over parking space.

Also, that some chauffeurs are armed because they double as bodyguards. If you think a hired driver should give way to you out of respect for your higher social position, think again. The driver/bodyguards of the rich and powerful are often more arrogant and more abusive than their employers.

So if it comes down to disputing parking space, prudence is the better part of valor—unless you're a Black Belter like Ramon Tulfo guarded by four heavily armed Marines.

Women are advised to practice defensive parking, too. Remember that violent incident in a car park building some years back involving a socialite and the wife of a diplomat after the socialite preempted the only parking slot left vacant?

People can get very emotional about what they believe are their parking rights, even if they are in the wrong. For instance, when all the parking space has been taken, many of us believe we have the right to park on the sidewalk, along the curb on the corner or in the parking slot reserved for the disabled.

Others believe they can park in a "No Parking" zone if they will be away for a short time only. They get hopping mad when they return and find out the car has been towed away. I know of a few cases when an angry car owner barged into the impounding area to redeem his car—at gunpoint, without paying the fine.

But defensive parking is more than just minimizing risk to one's life and limb. It is also about protecting your car against theft, vandalism and damage.

Covered parking in a car park building that has roving security guards is worth the parking fee. Your car is shielded from the sun, the rain, bird droppings and, to some degree, from vandalism and theft. To discourage car thieves, use a steering wheel lock even if your car has an anti-theft alarm system and engine immobilizer.

In an open parking lot on a sunny day, it's cool to park under the shade of a tree. But trees shed leaves and blossoms, some of which contain nectar or sap that can stain the paint of your car. Bird droppings, nectar and sap should be removed as soon as possible to prevent the stain from becoming permanent, so always have a flask of water and a cleaning rag stored in the trunk for this purpose.

In general, it is better to reverse into parking space and to exit it in forward gear. But if you're parking an extra-long vehicle such as a pickup truck, a sport ute or a van, the rear end of your vehicle may butt into the space of the parking slot behind. In such a case, it is preferable to enter the parking space in forward gear and to have the tail end of the vehicle sticking out rather than its front end. Better still, the car park building management should mark parking slots "For small cars only" if they are unsuitable for the big ones.

When you're reversing into parking space in an open parking lot, watch out for a lamp post, a fence, a plant box or a tree lest you miscalculate its distance and back up into it. According to a reader, a lamp post in the Rockwell Power Plant Mall's parking area in Makati has been hit by—and has dented—the rear bumpers of quite a few cars because it stands right on top of the demarcation line/boundary of one of the parking lanes.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Warning: dates on calendars are closer than they appear.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph

Toyota drive-in, trade-in fair on

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. is holding this summer's biggest secondhand vehicle trade-in event dubbed "Toyota Drive-in Trade -In Fair" until Sunday at the Fort Bonifacio Global City.

All trade-in customers during the event will automatically receive a P10,000 Toyota Value Certificate which they can opt to use as cash discount or as an additional subsidy for their new vehicle down payment. The trade-in fair is also offering all buyers on-site credit approval with the presence of the country's leading financial institutions—Metrobank, RCBC, Philam Savings Bank, I Bank, BPI and PSBank.

Customers planning to trade-in their vehicle also need not worry on the appraisal value of their cars. The Buendia Auto Center Dealers Association, the city's leading used car dealer, is providing fair and honest vehicle appraisals for all inter-

Face to face with a Durango

By Charles E. Buban

IT stared at me like a mean animal. But running away from it was farthest from my mind. On the contrary, it was this rugged look and rigid framework that kept me gazing at the Dodge Durango for some time.

I decided to get behind the wheel of this gentle beast which its exclusive distributor Norkis Automotive Resources Corp. was more than glad to lend to me for a couple of days. They lent me a black full-time four-wheel SLT with a multispeed automatic transmission.

The Durango is Dodge's tough contender in the sport-utility market. It is perfect for anyone who wants an SUV that isn't cramped, but isn't huge. It is right in the middle.

The Durango shines as an expensive grocery-getter and basketball-team hauler. Unlike other SUVs, its dimension is rather compact but once inside you'll be amazed by its roominess. It offers room for eight to 10 passengers or 88 cubic feet (2.5 cubic meters) of cargo space. However, you'll have to make a choice—the passenger or useable interior cargo space—because you can't have the best of both worlds. Thankfully, a standard roof rack further expands your cargo-carrying options.

Third row seats

What differentiates the Durango from the rest of the SUVs is its third row seats. The Durango is the first SUV to offer this feature that allows three more people to sit comfortably. Access to the third row is quick and easy, thanks to the fold-and-tumble forward second-row seating. However, if the trip is going to be a long one, I would suggest that taller individuals avoid the third row seats since the legroom won't allow them excessive movements.

Headroom shouldn't be an issue. With a raised roofline, you can see easily outside but without having your head stuck to the SUV's ceiling. Overall, the interior is quite comfortable with seats that are supportive and don't cause too much fatigue. I especially like the toggle switch controls on the driver's seat that automatically adjust the seating angle including the back seat and the distance to the dashboard.

DODGE Durango 4x4

CHARLES BUBAN

All the controls are simple and within reach. The Durango comes with lots of power—with simple button flips, you can centrally control the windows and door locks through a panel located on the driver's side.

Looks and overall design ●●●●◗
Convenience features ●●●●
Safety ●●●◗
Handling and riding comfort ●●●●
Engine and drivetrain ●●●●◗
Fuel economy ●●●

If you are driving alone, you may appreciate the two toggle switches tucked just behind either side of the steering wheel that control the stereo. With them, and without taking your hands from the wheel or your eyes from the road, you can change stations that are preset, scan from station to station, switch radio bands, toggle from radio to CD to cassette and back, and of course, adjust the volume.

More power to haul

Beyond the Durango's 35,000 psi steel frame is a powerful 4.7-liter Magnum V8 engine capable of generating 235 horsepower and an impressive 5,950 pounds of pull.

The Durango rides very comfortably on the highway but can be a bit bouncy on rougher city streets. The reason is that 80 percent of the Durango's parts were shared with the Dodge Dakota, including the platform. But that's where their similarities end since the Durango's frame is thrice stiffer than its pickup cousin.

Off-road, the Durango is a capable wilderness sprinter. It can negotiate easily on any uneven surfaces and a lot more obstacles. Too bad I wasn't able to go into some place that would really test its all-wheel capabilities.

My scorecard

So how do I rate this SUV? On my scorecard, the Dodge Durango rated high on looks and overall design (4.5 out of 5). Its solid framework and macho look (not to mention the P2.7 million price tag that goes with it) will surely raise your *pogi* points.

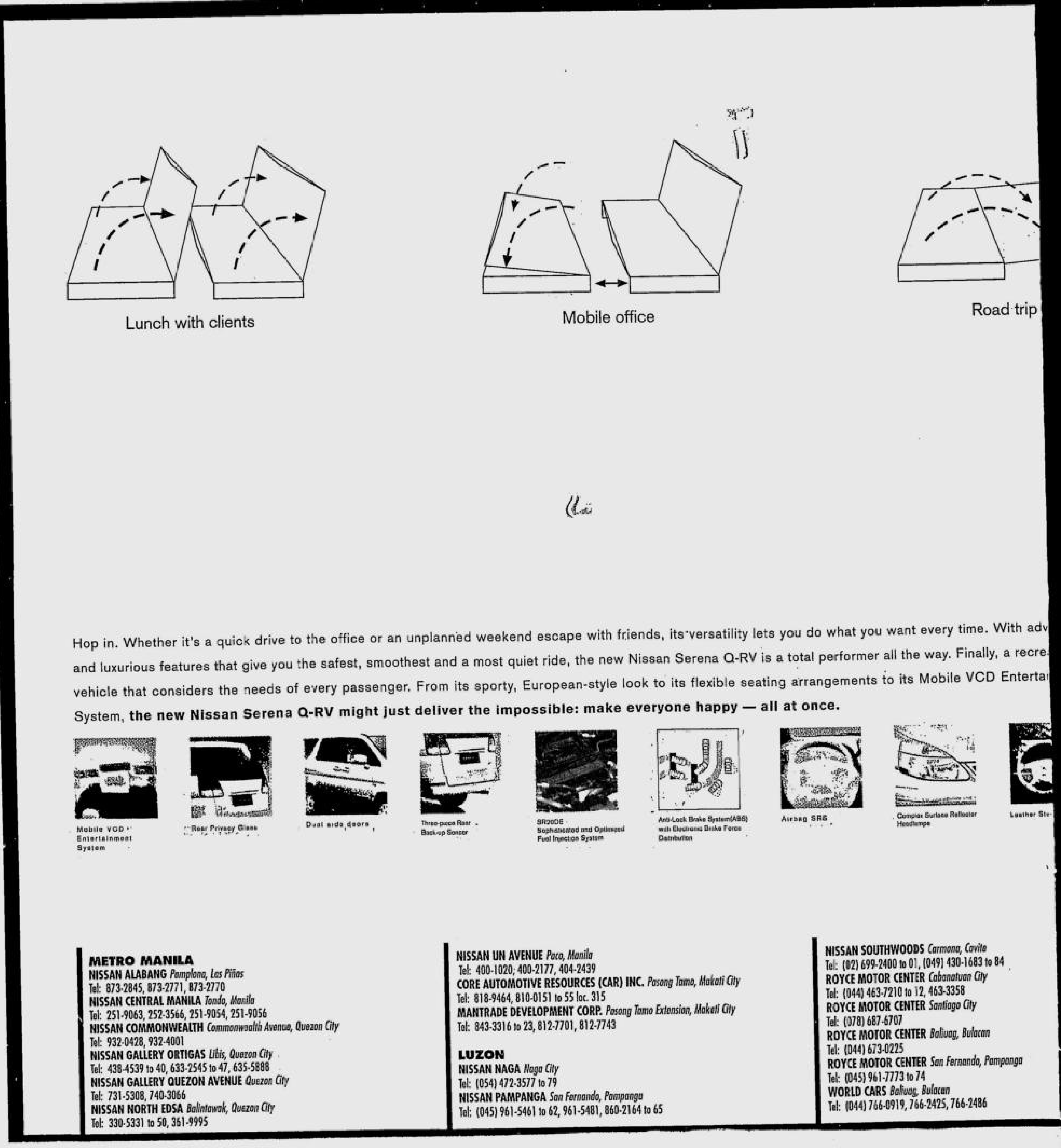
With a third row seat feature and power (windows, door locks, steering, side view mirrors, driver seat and cruise control) features, plus the wonderful controls at the steering wheel, I gave the Durango a 4 under the convenience features department.

On the safety department, I gave the Durango a 3.5. The Durango's next-generation airbags (featuring a supplementary restraining system), front seat knee blocker, an antilock braking system, child protection rear door locks, 3-point seatbelt and dynamic side-impact intrusion protection ensure you have a safe and comfortable ride.

In terms of handling and riding comfort, the Durango scored 4 stars. Steering is commendably responsive and corners unbelievably flat. And because of the Durango's compact body frame, negotiating around the city's narrow streets isn't a problem. You'll appreciate too its automatic transmission, which comes in handy especially during traffic and whenever you're stuck on steep inclines.

The Durango's powerful engine and excellent towing capacity should merit 4.5 points on the engine and drivetrain department. It also wouldn't hurt to know that the Durango is a full-time all-wheel-drive vehicle, meaning, it will function on all types of surfaces, both on- and off-road.

I guess there's one department that the Durango won't fare well and its fuel economy (3 points). But we should understand that having a powerful V8 engine and an all-wheel drive system means it needs a lot of fuel (unleaded gasoline much recommended). On the bright side, at 18.1 (city) and 13.1 (highway) liters per 100 km, the Durango is still fuel-efficient compared to its 4x4 SUV counterparts.



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Hop in. Whether it's a quick drive to the office or an unplanned weekend escape with friends, its versatility lets you do what you want every time. With adv
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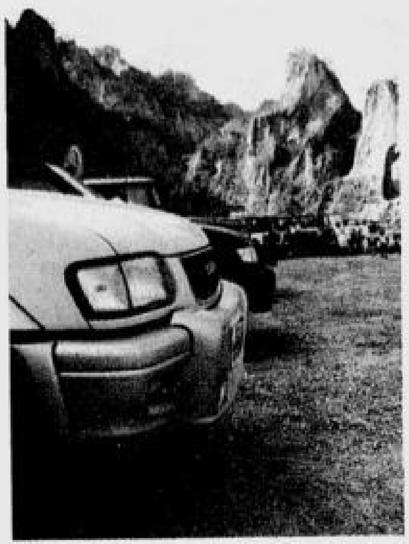
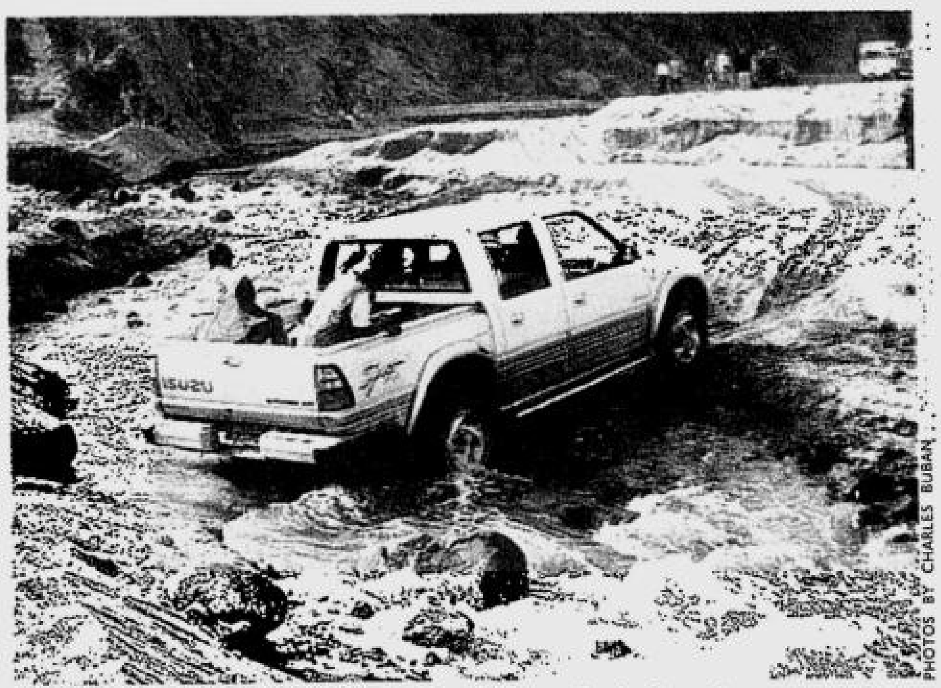


THE WILD horses, well, this time they had wheels instead of legs

THE UNPREDICTABLE sands demanded sound judgment from drivers. They had to know when to use the "4 high" and "4 low" gears.



RIVER crossings become the proving ground for the 2.8-liter diesel turbo engine.

PHOTOS BY CHARLES BUBAN

COMMUNING WITH NATURE

Crater-lake dip caps dusty drive into lahar

By Tessa R. Salazar

THERE'S something about volcanoes that seem to eternally attract humans. After the eruptions, curious men and women flock to the crater to catch a glimpse of nature's grace, splendor and temper.

Nowadays, humans employ some reliable machine power to help them get to the crater faster.

The remnants of Mount Pinatubo offer some of the most breathtaking views, which are humbling and awe-inspiring. The vast, barren landscape offers "testbeds" for 4x4s. The desert-like setting also becomes a venue for testing the endurance of explorers-cum-motorists.

This time, it was Isuzu's and some members of media's turn to test their driving and trekking skills.

Easiest route

Two Isuzu Fuego 4x4 Sport pickups—one automatic and one manual transmission—set "sail" from Sta. Juliana in Capas, Tarlac. The Capas trail had been considered the easiest (thus, most popular) route to the Pinatubo crater. Nevertheless, the whole trip provided different types of terrains of varying difficulties.

The two Fuegos were carrying 15 warm bodies, and, just like in Western movies, the group rode like cowboys in the alternately muddy and dusty rugged lahar flats, bucking the terrains. The wild horses—well, this time had wheels instead of legs—negotiated the rugged slopes.

Refresher course

It was just my third time to join a Pinatubo off-road test drive, the previous ones from another automaker where I took a short off-road-drive training. Sadly, those two previous adventures didn't take me straight to the crater.

Even now, I still found myself feeling the jitters of a first-time off-roader. This was a situation where I had to unlearn my city driving habits and relearn new skills in off-track driving. One of the most experienced off-road drivers, Manila Bulletin reporter Aries Ilagan, gave the rookies a refresher course, a pat on the back and some comic relief.

The unpredictable sands demanded sound judgment from drivers. They had to know when to use the "4 high" and "4 low" gears. They had to have a firm grip on the steering wheel, yet they had to avoid "locking" their thumbs in, lest a sudden twist on the wheels could render serious injuries on that finger.

They had to keep in mind the engine brakes during descents were the "anchor." As off-road drivers, we had learned to rely less on the brake pedals than on the engine brake itself.

Off-road drivers also had to refrain themselves from speeding, especially if the pickup had passengers on its bed. The Fuegos, which gave drivers that feeling of confidence even on slippery trails and soft mud, invited some of us to drive real fast. As a result, a colleague nearly fell off as he held his camera.

An abrupt stop, meanwhile, also caused an Aeta guide on the pickup bed to kiss the rear window so torridly that it hurt.

All those reminders, and the drivers still couldn't help but notice the magnificence of Pinatubo's legacy.

The river crossings allowed the 2.8-liter diesel turbo engines of Isuzu to prove their worth. The Fuego's high-ground clearance, and its wide aero magwheels provided the stability on above-the-knee-deep rivers and rocky grounds. The air-conditioning was ample, even under the scorching heat of the sun.

Along with the other locally assembled jeeps, the Fuegos went up to Bangantungul, a small Aeta makeshift village about 10 km off the crater. It was there that we had to leave the comforts of our workhorses and let our legs do the rest of the job on our way to the crater.

Three hours later, we reached the crater. There, we swam on the warm volcanic waters of the lake trying to take advantage of its supposed therapeutic effects. The Department of Tourism said some divers had attempted to fathom the 2-km-wide lake. Others were content to kayak their way across the lake.

Much alive

Occasionally, we could hear rumblings from the other end of the crater rim as we witnessed mini landslides cascading into the lake. Sometimes, small bubbles would surface on the lake.

These were reminders that the lake was still very much alive. The initial fury may have subsided, but Pinatubo still grumbles, and probably only the Aetas can understand what the angry mountain is trying to say.

Nevertheless, we continue to visit the mountain. Trips to Pinatubo are packaged like any other eco-tour. Guides say that because of the other-worldly landscapes brought about by the eruption and constant reformation from the rains and floods during the wet season, no permanent trails are available. Jump-off points are also located around the mountain. Depending on the course of the lahar, one jump-off point could become impassable and a new one would be opened.

In June 1991, Mt. Pinatubo spewed tons of volcanic materials that resulted in the formation of a 2-km-wide, 650-meter-deep crater. Phivolcs reported that rain water during succeeding rainy seasons and spring discharges from the walls of the crater continue to fill the crater, forming a lake within the volcano. Freshwater now covers the entire width of the crater wall.

The Pinatubo eruption was considered one of the biggest eruptions of the world the past century. It ejected ashes 25 km into the atmosphere, covering 200 square kilometers.

Its haze circled around the globe altering world temperatures. Though it has been relatively quiet since its eruption, it is still active. And whispering its secrets to its chil-

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NISSAN

Ford eyes 15% market share in 2005

By Raul C. Dancel

FORD Group Philippines is seeking to corner about 15 percent of the domestic market in three years, the company's new president has said.

"I intend to grow our market share in the Philippines to what I believe is our rightful share," Ford Philippines president Henry Co told reporters.

Co said Ford Philippines' current "product mix" was preventing the automaker from taking a bigger share of the market.

"With the introduction of new and exciting products in the next few years, I intend to grow our share from 6.7 percent today to 15 percent by 2005," he said.

The automaker sold 5,1576 units last year.

Car sales slipped 2.2 percent to 11,425 units from January to February this year from 11,686 units in the same period last year, according to the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc.

Co, a former executive of Nissan Motor Philippines Inc., has taken the helm of Ford Philippines, the first Filipino to head the domestic operations of a major automaker.

Apart from working on increasing Ford Philippines' market share, Co said he would also try to establish the automaker's position as a major supplier of completely built-up (CBU) units in Southeast Asia.

Ford Philippines exports completely built-up Lynx passenger cars to Thailand. It also assembles the Ranger pickup at its manufacturing plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Ford's Thai subsidiary, Auto Alliance Co. Ltd., in turn, is set to ship this year Ranger pickups and Volvo sedans to the Philippines.

Last month, Ford exported about 100 Lynx units to Thailand.

"Before the end of the year, we will be exporting about 600 vehicles to other parts of Asean," Co said.

"The era of an Asean regional market of 500 million consumers has started," Co said. "The business model wherein carmakers assembled small quantities of (completely knocked-down) kits using imported and some local parts for sale in a protected domestic market will go away."

He said with tariff on completely built-up units in Southeast Asia set to go down to 5 percent next year, "local content will be replaced by Asean content, CKD kits will be replaced by part-by-part importation, carmakers will integrate manufacturing in Asean, and plants will specialize in specific models."

"The competition will no longer be between local carmakers but between regional brands," he said.

Co said in Southeast Asia's new auto market, "carmakers who refuse to recognize this change run the risk of failure."

In the case of Ford Philippines, he said, "I am very confident that with the strong management team the company has in the Philippines, we would be ready for this."

ISUZU Hi-Lander Crosswind

ISUZU Passenger Van

22 Isuzu vehicles shipped to Honduras

BRAND-NEW Isuzu vehicles recently rolled onto a cargo vessel en route to Honduras in Central America. Composed of 20 Hi-Lander Crosswinds and 2 Isuzu Passenger Vans (IPV), the cargo will serve as sample units for the automotive market in the Honduras.

Hiroshi Ishino, executive vice president of Isuzu Philippines Corp., is very confident that the high- performance, top-quality Isuzu utility vehicles will continue to find their way into foreign markets.

Said Ishino: "Our vehicles conform with the growing global trend toward flexibility in usage and fuel economy, in particular, the growing awareness of the benefits of diesel engines and we expect to increase both the volume of exports and the number of our foreign market as well."

In 2000 the IPC tested the waters by exporting 15 units of the Hi-Lander in October and another 15 units in November to Honduras, and the results were very promising. With this, the company decided to seriously consider export in time with the full-model change of their Hi-Lander in 2001.

www.caltex.com

What Drives You

The Caltex Delo 4x4 Extreme Challenge. Mangima, Bukidnon. April 27 and 28.

Witness 2 days of trucks, guts and glory.

The off-road event of the year is here. Experience extreme action like never before. Watch the biggest and meanest 4x4s gear it up for the challenge – now it's time to conquer Bukidnon!

Catch this 2nd Leg of 4x4 madness from Caltex Delo!

Children, music and cell phones are deadly

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

I KNOW you will be shocked by this. Do you know that the most common causes of vehicular accidents are children, cell phones and music?

This was revealed in a study in Paris done by an independent agency.

The survey said children, cell phones and music could easily distract a driver's concentration.

Talking to a kid while driving and trying to restrain a kid from getting too unruly while the vehicle is in motion can cause fatal accidents.

The cell phone was found to destroy a driver's focus, especially when traveling in a freeway.

And music was the culprit in many road accidents recorded in Europe, according to the Paris study. .

So next time you drive, go easy on the kid, on that cell phone and on your radio.

* * *

Here's a letter from Trinity V. Atienza of 60 B.G. Molina St., Parang, Marikina City.

"Dear Sir,

"Through you, I would like to thank the personnel of LTO San Fernando, Pampanga, particularly Mr. Rex Laxa, for their kind attention when I transacted business at their offices on March 26, 2002.

"However, I cannot say the same to LTO Marikina, which sent me back to San Fernando, Pampanga, on April 1, without logic.

"A brief history.

"I bought a new engine for my Tamaraw, which was registered promptly at PNP Capitolyo Pasig last month.

"I brought the papers to LTO Marikina, which then instructed me to get confirmation from LTO San Fernando. We got the clearance on March 26.

"But when I presented all the documents on April 1 to LTO Marikina, I was ordered, to my surprise, to secure a letter attesting to the legitimacy of my Tamaraw in spite of the fact that I had regularly registered it with LTO Marikina for almost 15 years now."

* * *

The ongoing "Toyota Drive-in Trade-in Fair" at the Fort Bonifacio Global City has been drawing crowds since it opened on April 22.

Ending on April 28, the event has the support of all Toyota dealers, leading banks in the country and the most reliable used-car buyers association in the market today.

A come-on is that the event is a one-stop shop where used-car trade-in, on-site credit symbol and other special value financing packages will be offered to all Toyota buyers and visitors.

Motorists and other kibitzers can go to The Fort's South parking area right in front of Dencio's restaurant for this novelty event.

* * *

I missed the launch of the All New Nissan Serena Q-RV on Tuesday, April 23. But I didn't mean it. I mean, how could I snub a lady like Tonette Lee, Nissan's amiable executive who is a friend to all?

Will make it up to you, Tonette. That's a promise.

And, yes, I wasn't around, too, when Honda unveiled its latest CR-V.

Friends of mine have been asking me: Will the new CR-V really beat the already fine performance of its predecessor?

And my standard answer is, no comment at the moment. I have yet to drive it, you know.

Paging Honda's powerhouse crew: Arnel, Tin Tin, Min and Dansel.

* * *

QUOTE ME. When driving, you can keep your cool by pretending to be the best driver in the world.